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Origins

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"Get the fuck out of my house you devious piece of shit!" my drunken father curses at me in Russian. My legs storm me over to the front door. Just as I snatch the car keys from off the counter, I see the table lamp soaring in the air; it comes straight for my head. My quick reflexes gift me the ability to dodge it in time. The lamp shatters against the door and rests on the floor in pieces. My father groans with great irritation and hatred. "Look at what your stupid ass made me do, you have 3 fucking seconds to get the damn broom and clean this mess up!"

I swing the front door open; it sweeps the broken remains across the floor. My throat feels dry but I ensure that our argument ends with me. "All the brooms in the world couldn't fix you or your household!" I slam the door. Beneath the wood, I hear muffled yells. I run to my car, start it up, and I hit the gas.

I let out a sigh of relief while I glide on the smooth concrete road. The setting sun helps me feel at peace. The tension in my house seems heated, however, I regret to inform you that it was a completely regular day. My father isn't the most patient and compassionate person; all it takes is one tiny little thing to offset his entire demeanor. Once he's frustrated, he will reign hell. It wasn't even my fault as to why he was upset. It was the kind of situation of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. One of my younger siblings had pissed him off. I don't know how or why but I do know it's their faults and honestly, that's all I need to know- I could care less for the story. Not many of them really like or get along with my father. Would you believe me if I told you that I was the one to have the best relationship with him out of all my siblings? He told me that I was his favorite. Sad as it is to say, I don't get along with too many of my siblings either. I wonder if this would be any different if I had a mother in the picture.

Everyone in my family is unlikable; and that includes me too. I

wasn't fond of receiving compliments or praises- shit, I barely can recount my friends. I didn't like the loneliness at first when I was a boy, but overtime I grew comfortable to it and it has become my choice.

So you might ask me where exactly I was driving to, and to answer your question: anywhere but my household. I had to get away from the constant screaming and violence for a few hours. I'll return once I am recharged. My mind subconsciously feeds me ideas as I wait at a red light; perhaps I could go to the store and pick up a new table lamp. I'm sure my father would appreciate it deep down inside. He needed all the light he could get in his life.

I turn my car to follow the imaginary route in my head. I pass a few stores along the way before I pull into a parking lot with a strip mall. I didn't like heavily populated areas but this mini mall was usually empty. It was peaceful. The strips of stores were clean and constructed beautifully- they boxed in a fancy water fountain. Within this mini mall, I know there is a good knick-knack store with affordable items. It was bound to contain a simple table lamp.

I swiftly pull my car into a parking space. I power off the engine and tuck the keys away in my pocket. Soon before I know it, I'm walking on the sidewalk to the store. I take in the lovely dimming scenery around me. I wish sunsets were longer, they were my favorite time of day. It's sad that they only last a few minutes.

I am interrupted from my thoughts when a group of 5 teenagers pour out from a clothing store in front of me. I knew these guys- they are enrolled in many of my classes and I am forced to see them at school. Luckily, it's summertime. Their names are Poland, Germany, South Korea, Japan, and America. I'm not going into detail of exactly who they are to me because I barely know them like that. All I know is that they are smart enough to be in my classes and could be vultures. They talk loudly and fill the world with laughter. I grow annoyed at their existence, and yet, anxious. Knowing that I had to walk past them made me worry. Anytime I have to walk past a group of teenagers, I found it intimidating- I don't know why. Usually, I was the one intimidating people. And the ironic thing is that I could take them all on in a fight.

I keep my head down and my gaze averted as I speed walk past them. Their conversation barely changes tone so I doubt that they had noticed me. It must be nice to be so distracted by good company that you lose sense of your surroundings. I want to envy them but I have no right, I chose to be ostracized. It was for the best anyways. The more people you know, the more problems you have; the more disappointed you will be in mankind.

I enter the empty shop and search for a simple table lamp.

About 15 minutes later I exit the store with the lamp in my grasp. I was successful at my search and found exactly what I was looking for. Just in time too, the stores were now all closing. I start to make my way back to my car, the group of my peers were gone. Or so I thought...

One stands in front of the hood of my car taking selfies of himself. I keep a distance of 10 feet and I stare at him bewildered. What the fuck was this moron doing? I clear my throat and I get ahold of his attention. "Can you please get away from my car?" I ask.

America looks up at me and lowers his phone like he was caught committing a crime. He lets out a loose nervous chuckle. "Sorry!" he takes a few steps away from my car and towards me. "You have a really nice car. Which dealership did you get it from?"

I roll my eyes and walk over to my trunk. "Don't you have something better to do?" I tuck my lamp in the back and close the trunk.

He shrugs. "Not really..."

"Bullshit!" I say, "I saw you hanging out with your friends before!" The audacity of him, to take something that great for granted.

"Ah well... hanging out is no fun when you are only the fifth wheel..."

"Cry me a river. Be grateful your friends are nice enough to include you in their plans." I tell him.

He sighs. "You won't get it; forget I said anything." He begins to

walk away.

"Gladly." I mutter. I reach for the car door handle but I don't open it because I soon hear America stop walking.

I turn to look over at him and he glances over his shoulder. "Also, I wouldn't put that lamp in the trunk like that. All it takes is one sharp turn or bump to cause it to shatter."

I narrow my eyes at him threateningly. "You got a better idea wise guy?"

He rotates his body to fully face me seeming interested. "Yes I do as a matter of fact!" He walks over to my trunk and gestures his hand to it. "May I?"

My angry gaze stays fixed upon him as I pop open the trunk. I was curious to know what he could possibly have in mind, it wasn't like I was in a rush to get to where I live. He smiles and takes the lamp from out of the car. He walks over to the passenger seat, opens the door, and straps the lamp in the seat. He extends his arms out as if he was displaying a rare exhibit.

I stare at him unamused and disgust swells in my face. "That is the most fucking ridiculous thing I have ever seen! Get the fuck out of my sight!"

He starts laughing hysterically. I walk over to the passenger door to remove the lamp and I slam the door shut. He continues laughing at something so pointless. He wipes a tear with a smile on his face. "I'm sorry, I'm sorry... it's stupid but I promise it'll work!"

I roll my eyes and I walk away to the driver's seat with the lamp cradled in my arms. He calms down and asks me "Where are you going?"

I wanted to say "home" but the word would leave a bad taste on my tongue. I don't consider where I live to be my home, it felt so distant and uncomfortable. I live on edge and I feel I will be attacked at every given moment. It definitely wasn't a healthy environment to grow up in. I walk past the driver's seat and pop

open the trunk again. Back to square one. I tuck the simple lamp into the void of my car.

America didn't seem to mind that I ignored his question. He walks more over to where I am and he changes the subject. "You know, you are very mysterious."

"Okay?" I say. I wasn't sure if it were a compliment or an insult.

He stares at me with a soft smile. It's starting to creep me out- come to think of it, I found it odd America was still lingering around. "Do you want something? Why are you still here?" I question.

"Well I don't know how to say this lightly but, I was hanging out with my friends and they split up to start doing "couple stuff". I'm not one to want to be involved or witness such things, it made me very uncomfortable so I discreetly left them to wait until they were done. It's been about 20 minutes, I thought they had completely forgotten about me by accident..."

I look at him in confusion. Why was he telling me such a long story? I wish he could be more direct.

"It turns out they left me here on purpose. They took my car keys when I wasn't looking, stole my car, and left me stranded here. My phone is dying and I was wondering if you could just give me a ride home."

"No." I say cold heartedly. I felt sorry for the guy but not that sorry. I would have never guessed of how shitty his friends were, see why I don't have any?

"Please?" he tries.

"I said no." I repeat.

"But why?" he asks with confusion.

"Because I don't have to and plus, you were being fake from the very start. You should have just asked instead of forcing a dreadful conversation." I explain.

"My original intentions were not to ask you for a ride, I needed someone to talk to." he tells me.

"Bullshit!" I say, "I hope you rot in this parking lot." I go to my driver's seat and I speed off leaving the American.

Call me an asshole. I don't care. I don't do favors like that; and for a good damn reason. Over the years I learned that if you do something nice for someone, they will keep asking you for things. It will be a never ending cycle and you will always feel obligated to help them. I was only looking out for myself.

And yet, I partially began to feel bad for my doing. I didn't even want to go home; I could've spared a bit of my time helping out the American. I always thought of him to be an annoying jerk but he has been nothing but respectful and nice. However, he could've only been acting like that because he wanted something.

Overthinking hurts my brain; it is a true curse. I guess that is a con of being so isolated, I was forced to hear all the thoughts in my head. I do a U-turn on the lone road and I drive back to the mini mall. When I arrive, it was as desolated as I had left it.

I park my car and I hop out. It was dark outside, all that lit my way were the lampposts and my headlights. "America!" I call. I hear not a sound in return.

He doesn't seem to be here. I start to regret not helping him earlier- I was too late. Well, I guess all I can do now is hope that he gets home safe. I was about to walk back over to my car; but I see something moving on the dark cement. America.

I walk over to him. He lays down in the middle of the parking lot staring up at the sky. He surprisingly seemed comfortable. "Hey, did you not hear me calling you?" I asked annoyed. He doesn't answer.

"What are you still doing here? Get off the ground!" I say.

"If you concentrate long enough, you can see the stars through the clouds." America says without taking his eyes off the sky. His tone sounded tired.

I was in no rush. I lay down next to him and I stare up too. I was urged by my curiosity and not having anything better to do. I try focusing on the sky. "I don't see shit." I say.

"You're not looking hard enough." America says.

"There is nothing to be seen."

"You're wrong." He finally turns his head to look at me. "There is always something to be seen, you are nothing but negative."

I sit up angrily. "I am solely being realistic!"

"Nah, you are definitely a pessimistic person. It isn't necessarily a bad thing." he concludes.

"If you ever call me that again..." I threaten.

"Threatening someone would be considered negative." he chimes. I roll my eyes, "Shut up, I don't know what you are trying to prove."

"If you refuse to be labeled as negative, does that mean you think you are a positive person?"

"No, stop putting words in my mouth- that isn't what I am saying at all!" I shout back in annoyance. Perhaps I should have never returned.

"You don't have to say anything; I already know." he says confidently.

"Know what?" I question.

"Call it basic or call it traditional; you are negative on the outside but I know you are a positive person within." he elaborated.

I stare at him like he has 7 heads. "I am neither positive or negative, I am only neutral!"

"Sure you good hearted bitch." he states slyly with every word laced in a joking tone.

My jaw slightly drops; surprised at his sudden change in behavior. I never knew him to act like this. I respond by flipping him off with my middle finger.

He barely looked offended. "You may come off as a jackass but you drove your car back here all the way to find me. You certainly aren't heartless, your heart is simply imbedded in your thick skin." I want to say something but I hesitate. I am afraid that the next words I say will be used against me in some way.

"I could honestly read you like a book, I already know so much about you from this conversation alone." he chuckles lightly.

I finally string my words together. "That's it! Stop fucking analyzing me right now you creep, I didn't ask for you to do that!"

"Sorry, I can't help it. I'm slightly interested in studying the brain. I hate to admit that I find joy in exploring other's minds." he says. I resort to a more calmer tone of understanding. "Well please don't ever do it again."

"Why? Did it make you that uncomfortable?" Quite inquisitive this man was- I'll give him that! I answer him slowly; "Very..."

"You're cute when you are on edge like that." he tells me.

"Did... what did you call me?" His comment raises great discomfort in me. It was unexpected and took me by surprise.

"Cute." he says with a poker face. "I don't think I've ever seen you react like that, you're usually pretty quiet." I respect of how open and honest he was, however, I'd be lying if I didn't say that it was starting to intimidate me. I build a defense within myself and offer him a new threat: "If you ever refer to me as that again, I think I will actually slit your throat open and make it my new air refresher."

"I like it when you threaten me, the shivers feel nice." he answers like a psychopath- perhaps had I encountered a masochist? Why was it that I stumbled upon this?

"You're a fucking weirdo." I tell him.

"You're a fucking cutie." he says back to me.

"Stop." I speak through my gritted teeth. I was still having a hard time of understanding how I appeared to be "cute", I in fact believed I was the complete opposite. This man had to be toying with me. I soon hear America respond in a small laugh. I had thought of it to be mocking but I couldn't bring myself to view him as an enemy. He seemed to be different than everyone; I couldn't even relate him to the characters I would read about in my books. I had no desire to leave in the moment.

Uncomfortable of the situation, I find myself switching the subject for a change. I looked over to him. "So why did you decide to lay in the parking lot?" I lay back down beside him. I couldn't believe that I was now interested in him- but I couldn't help that I was genuinely curious. I found myself to be a lotus-eater; and he was the flower.

His laugh fades into the air. He took a second before answering. "After a long terrible day, it feels nice. Knowing that it is unusual and that I am not suppose to, brings me comfort- or maybe I wouldn't mind being hit by a truck." he admits.

"Lay on a highway next time then." I suggest to him. I see his expression change like he had came to a realization. "Maybe someday..." he considers.

I look back up at the cloudy sky while America looked at the starry sky. I still couldn't see any stars. We continued to talk to each other. It was oddly refreshing, and yet so bitter sweet. It was clear that neither of us were in the right head space, we spoke as if we had been defeated. I never had a conversation like this with anyone before. I could feel my guard being let down, I wasn't used to doing it but it felt right. It then started drizzling. "Do you feel rain drops too?" America asks me.

"Yeah." I respond. A drop hits my eye and it winces. I didn't mind the rain but I could only withstand it for a small duration of time.

"You know, before I left my house I checked the weather app. It said clear skies for the whole day, but the only clear thing I see is

that it had lied." he chuckles. "Has that ever happened to you?"

"Too often; that's why I don't rely on it anymore. I'd rather be taken by surprised than disappointed." I say.

"Huh." he nods his head. He pulls out his phone and starts tapping on the screen. "You make a great point. I think I'll delete it right now." I watch America do exactly what he said he was going to do. Right when he finishes, his phone dies. He sighs unamused. "Son of a bitch." I feel a small smile grow on my face as he tucks it away. He wasn't too bad to keep around for company.

"Don't you envy your phone when it dies?" I ask jokingly. I hear him fill the air with a delightful laugh. "Yeah. I wish it were me sometimes."

"Me too." I agreed. The rain begins to pour faster. I find myself sitting up finally losing my tolerance for it. "I'm starting to get uncomfortable..." I admit. "Let's go to my car."

America looks at me with a smirk like he wants to say something snarky. I know he wasn't expecting for me to allow him into my car. But he is wise not to comment on it and I watch as his face dissolves his smirk. "Sure!" he answers wholeheartedly. He holds his arm out indicating that he wants me to assist him in standing up. So I grab his hand and help him up as I stand. I let go of his hand to brush myself off of the recollecting rain drops building upon myself. We walk over to my car and get in. America rubs his hands together and looks around my car like a child in a candy store. I start the engine and turn on the heat because I can see that he is colder than me.

"Can you turn the heat on?" he asks unaware of my doing.

"I just did." I inform. He speaks once again with a chill demeanor, however, I can hear frustration and impatience imbedded in his voice. "It's blowing out cold air!"

"Give it a second." I try to cure and bring down his level of concerns.

"One." he spits out. I stare at him unamused. He smiles in response. "I'm only messing with you. Hey, are you sure you don't want the lamp in the front seat?"

"Stay there. The lamp will be perfectly fine." I start driving with no destination in mind. I had not a clue of where the American lived, I wasn't so sure that I was prepared for his departure quite yet.

"Can we make a bet that it won't be?" he challenges. I warn him that "I'm not giving away more than 5 dollars..."

"It doesn't have to be money. If that lamp breaks while you're behind the wheel, then I want you to hang out with me this weekend."

"That is an odd request but okay." I was relatively confused because out of everything he could ask for, that is what he suggests. I was troubled trying to understand why. Did that mean he too was enjoying my company? It makes the ocean within me stir and slosh around. I feel that my car has finally started to warm.

"Now it's your turn to think of something." he says. Sadly, I failed at coming up with something on the spot. "Uh alright... if the lamp is completely fine, which it will be, I want you to...um. I don't know... I still need to think."

He is understanding and tells me "That's good enough for me, you won't win anyways." he smirks. It slightly irritates me so I say the first thing to come to mind. "When I win, I want you to lay on a highway."

His smile widens in satisfaction. "Alright you got yourself a deal." he says. The strong will he had to go along with it without questioning anything raised genuine concern in me. I cock my eyebrow up at him. I was only joking about laying on the highway, did he really think I was being serious? "You know that I was kidding right?"

His smile returns to a neutral state. "Oh...sorry- it's honestly hard to tell when you're joking; you only have like three facial expressions: tired, angry, and even more angry."

"Tch try walking a day in my shoes and you'll start to see why..." I joke again.

He laughs and relaxes more in his seat. It has appeared that he had learned quickly of my jokes after that correction. "I think we are going to be good friends." he tells me.

"I don't want friendship, it's a waste of time." I say stubbornly. He develops a quick response to counter against my argument. "With the wrong people, yes, but I assure you I'll be worth your while."

"Don't give me hope." I plead. Was I even deserving of a friend? The thought troubled me greatly; it seemed unnatural for me to be in a friendship of any sort. I was deprived of it for years, I found it impossible for me to rekindle the sense of normalcy.

"Wow, who made you this pessimistic?" he asks me seeming fascinated. There is only one to be blamed for it; "Me, myself, and I." I say. I then realized I had finally admitted to him that I was in fact pessimistic. I expected to be bashed for it but he never comments on it. He only shakes his head with his words following shortly after. "I do not deem that to be true, you were most likely corrupted by bad people and I'm truly sorry about that. At least we are in the same boat."

I could see where this conversation may be heading. Before it could ascend further, I hit the breaks, well not literally: "Holy shit you really like personal deep conversations huh?"

He smiles once again. "I live for them actually! I haven't had a real conversation like this in years. It's refreshing. Thanks for being the set of ears to listen to me. Let me return the favor."

"Return the favor?" I ask. He nods and explains. "Yes, it's your turn now; go ahead, speak your mind. I'm listening." His words for whatever reason brought me great comfort. He made me feel something I had never felt before; seen.

It seemed to be such a great opportunity but I found myself unprepared. "I don't know what to talk about..." I admit with my words slightly saddened. He attempts to help me out. "Talk about

anything. It could be about your interests, hobbies, past, or your overall feelings of life. I'll listen to absolutely anything."

I decide to seize the opportunity; I was holding too many things in that I needed to release. It was unhealthy. It felt safe for me to overshare just this once. After all, we seemed to be in the same boat.

"Alright..." I begin.

Hyper-Independence

"When I was a boy, I used to think something was wrong with me. I experienced harsh treatment daily and nightly, if it wasn't from school, it was from home. It was a back and forth pattern that had occurred for me everyday. It was like I was trapped. I used one hell to escape the other. After a long day of being scolded by teachers, bullied by peers, and struggling in my studies, I would look forward to coming home... only to be scolded by my father, bullied by my siblings, and struggling in my chores- it would make me look forward to attend school the very next day... only to repeat the depressing never ending cycle. Throughout the entire process, I was alone. I tried to make friends but in the end, they always found a way to hurt or disappoint me within a day. I merely felt it was best to be completely alone and isolated. It was the safest. To fight all my battles solo made me stronger.

The only time I found peace was in sleep, that was if my mind wasn't clouded by nightmares,-and I found peace when I would walk by myself to and from school. These were like my short breaks from both hells when I didn't have to endure either of them. These short long lived moments instilled great peace in me for awhile, but I was soon to learn it wasn't enough. I started to look for a new escape outlet. I was desperate to break the cycle. Instead of returning home one day from school, I found myself stumbling in a library. The atmosphere was as peaceful as the waves in a small lake- tranquil. There was no screaming, everyone was required to speak in a hushed tone. I was surrounded by endless knowledge. With the sole purpose of this wondrous location, it wasn't a surprise I took on the challenge to read. I found myself reading a diverse number of genres; poetry, history, dramas, mythology, fairy-tales, biographies, fables, horrors, mysteries, and informational stories were to name a few. It helped fill the void and distracted myself from my miserable life.

Of course, nothing could be perfect. I was soon to realize that the more I obtained knowledge, the more miserable I became. I started

to deeply question my life and why it was this way. It was truly unfortunate.

My intelligence was something I could no longer hide when I started to excel in my studies. Many of my professors were shocked to see such improvement that they could never take credit for. The school decided to move me up to more advanced classes and I was no longer surrounded by my troublemaking peers. For once, my father was extremely proud of me during this time and I found that my life was improving. He demanded that I partake in no more chores so I could completely dedicate my time to my studies. My siblings were forced to pick up on all of my chores, the increased amount of work made them grow to hate me.

In my new classes, I was surrounded by arrogant people. I don't know why I expected the smarter people to be better than my previous peers. They were just as bad. They believed they were better than everyone else and jokingly referred to the students below them as "peasants". They were all in competition with each other to be the best. Despite that they were a little more mature, each word they spoke was laced with a fake kindness. They were all hungry sharks waiting to surpass the other. It was brutal. I wanted nothing more than to stay away from them. That was when I had learned it was unsafe to trust and befriend anyone. I have always longed for friends and companionship but after all I have witnessed, I no longer craved it. Befriending anyone was a large risk in itself. For the first time in my life, I was grateful that I was lonely. I wasn't truly happy but given my circumstances, it was for the best. A single friend could've been the cause of my possible downfall.

Randomly in my youth, I had hit a growth spurt and towered over all my peers. I wasn't even in middle school yet. They started to find me intimidating and strived to avoid me at all costs. It was simple, I avoided them and they avoided me- and that was that. The school days soon became long, dreadful, and boring. I was starting to lose my interest in learning. I feared that I would lose motivation and fall behind.

One day I had returned home later than usual. My father did not care of how late I stayed out, as long as my grades were good, he granted me any freedom I desired. I was headed to my room when I

heard the softest sobs in the kitchen. Curious, I inspected it. I found my little sister Belarus crying at the table. I wasn't good at being emotional support but I couldn't bring myself to leave her. When I asked her what was wrong she explained that she was struggling in school and was on the verge of being left back. She feared her friends would forget about her and she truly despised her teacher and couldn't withstand another year with them.

I wielded such intelligent power that I could easily help her. Although I was hesitant because I did not want to set her up for disaster. What if I made her too smart and she had to endure the vicious arrogant students like me? I offered to help her but I warned her of the possible cost. She thought about it momentarily but accepted. I began tutoring my little sister everyday after school. Soon I found that I was tutoring all of her friends as well. I don't know how it happened, it just did. My tutoring group started collecting more and more students to the point my father refused to let anyone else in his household. It was quite an amusing time. I may not like many people but I didn't mind children who desired to better themselves. Such pure innocent souls who were not entirely corrupted yet- I wish I could've had that perspective of them when I was of that age. That year, I made their teacher look like the best damn teacher in that school. It slightly irritated me that they took credit for my work but I let it go.

Because of this entire experience, Belarus was the sibling I was closest to. She was my favorite, all my other siblings were jealous of my intellect except her. She was inspired by it and now she is of an intelligent person herself. My father was proud of us both and excused us of many things. This started to make my other siblings envy us- green-eyed monsters! I could feel their hatred towards us, it made me quite uncomfortable. But there was nothing I could do, I'm not apologizing for being smart. I would have taken the time to help them to be like us if they had asked. They never did.

When my tutoring sessions died down, I once again felt empty. I was losing motivation in my studies. I decided to take a walk one day to help gather my thoughts. I had dedicated my entire life to my studies because it made me escape the hardships I had endured as a child. I had nothing else to live for. No goals, no aspirations- it

was quite depressing. I wanted to change it but I didn't know how. I had passed a frozen lake on my journey. I was tempted to plunge myself and drown in the freezing waters. But my mind was taken away from this thought when my gaze locked on the ice skaters that danced upon the ice. They looked so free. I used to ice skate myself when I was a very small boy, I sadly didn't remember much. I finally felt that spark I was longing for, something new to try in my life- a new thing to live for! I held onto this for as long as I could.

When I returned home that evening, I asked my father if I could have money to purchase ice skates. He declined my request and told me "I could do you something better." I thought it was strange and had not a clue of what was up that sleeve of his. I found him leading me to the basement of the house. Our basement was big and well lit. It was very spacious and wasn't crammed with neither boxes nor furniture. A wide mirror was mounted onto an entire wall. And on the opposite wall, a long wooden bar was mounted.

My father removed his large trench coat and hung it on the railing of the stair case. He then revealed to me that he would teach me ballet. I told him I wasn't interested and that it was for girls. He started doing stretches and he explained to me that it was a sport and anyone could do it. It hadn't convinced me in the slightest so he added that learning ballet would make me a better ice skater. That was when he sold the idea to me. Everyday in the week, he began to train me in secret. He told me he only had the patience to teach just me. I could understand why he wouldn't want to inform my other siblings about this. He would say that they weren't mature enough or that they had not earned the lesson- I felt he could've made an exception for Belarus though. Throughout my practices, she would question what I would do with our father downstairs. I couldn't tell her and disobey my father, the secret started to make her distrustful of me. She slowly kept getting more and more distant from me. But I know one day she will understand.

It was only a matter of time before I was a graceful motherfucker. It took years but my father had taught me all that he knew and helped me to perfect it. Ballet was great exercise; it had strengthened my muscles, I was extremely flexible, I had great posture, balance, and coordination. He told me that when I have children, he wanted me

to pass down all this knowledge to them. My father eventually stopped doing ballet classes with me but he encouraged me to continue it on my own. And I did. Although, on the last day he did it with me, he gifted me a present to show how proud he was of me. It was the ice skates I had asked for years ago. I had completely forgotten about it. I was over joyed and thanked him. Sadly, we too grew distant once our sessions together came to an end. That was the last time I was close to my father. To me, I feel like my father died on this day.

I had to wait a few months for the lake to freeze over once again to use my new ice skates. In the meantime, I continued my studies and practicing my ballet. Within this time period, something happened to my father. I wasn't sure what because he was super reclusive. He started drinking a lot until he could be considered an alcoholic. I've notice a great change in his behavior since then. He stopped cooking us food and we soon became starving children. My sisters were forced to step up and learn how to cook for us. I didn't have time to cook for everyone but I offered to go grocery shopping once a week to help out. For some reason, they never agreed to let me do this. My father stayed confined to his office so I tried to become the acting father. My siblings still hated me and would ignore me, but I know they needed me to put a signature on their report cards and drive them places. They still did most of the chores; all I had to do was sign their things for school, aid them when they were sick, and drive them places. Well, I tried to anyways... they would never accept my help even when I knew they were needing of it. I wish they didn't hate me so much, the ghosting was painful.

My father had then stopped his excessive drinking for reasons I don't know. He still drank but it was definitely less. He finally was starting to be seen throughout the house. However, his now reoccurring appearances didn't dare help when it came to running the household. Oddly, my father began to take my achievements and success for granted. It was like he was no longer proud of me. He got so accustomed to me being the best he didn't care for it anymore. And I get that he was going through something yet, it still made me feel a certain way. I've noticed with my father's sudden appearances, he seemed more aggressive. He became violent and started beating us if we angered him. My siblings and I would be

covered in bruises. He beat us up so many times, I have all the memories engraved into one in my head- I couldn't piece together a single story if I tried. When he would beat me, it was only when I was in my room and usually at night. He seemed so lost whenever he would wonder into my room, I knew it was the alcohol. I wouldn't fight back, I wouldn't dare- I endured every beating. I didn't find a point in fighting back, I knew that if I did something about it, everything would get worse. You could say that it was me being afraid but I wasn't; it was merely because I didn't care enough. It was easier to take the hits.

Soon I grew immune to his punches; they started to hurt less. Maybe it was because my father was getting weaker or I was getting stronger. I wouldn't know. He still actually abuses us from time to time. I just tend to witness it less now because I always know the right time to leave the house.

But throughout that time interval of my father's odd behavior, I was bored and lonely. My life had a peak once; now it remains in complete dull ruins.

I was miserable with not a single day of glory until the winter returned. I waited for that lake to freeze over. When it did, I finally could ice skate, I've longed for this moment. I hoped it would be as great as I deemed it to be. I immediately went to the frozen lake after school and I skated with my new skates. I struggled for a first few minutes but soon, I was a natural at it. Most of my memories of skating as a child resurfaced and plus I have the advantages of ballet. It was as great as I had imagined it. For once, the void that internalized within me finally felt filled.

The ice wasn't as stable as I deemed it to be. I heard cracks as I danced around the ice. It began to split- I've never skated so fast before. Leaping in the air to not step on a crack and drown. The cracks spread like a virus and chunks of ice floated in the water. My skills made me successfully make it to land. I lay in the grass catching my breath and I remember laughing. Such a rush of adrenaline felt amazing. I have never felt so alive. I couldn't believe that I craved such danger. I ignored it because it was stupid and I do not want to get myself killed-"

"It isn't stupid." America interrupted abruptly. I had completely forgotten that I had an audience. I felt ashamed of oversharing that much- I never talked that much before to anyone in my entire life. He allowed me to talk for that long only to cut me off now? It couldn't have been that significant to him; was it? "How so?" I ask him.

The American speaks. "Your story is eventful and beautiful, you convey it in such a way I can completely understand your feelings. We are not so different from each other. You were filled with too much success and prosperity at a young age- it nearly overwhelmed you. What is one to do when they are completely fulfilled? They either live in content or they search for more. You need things bigger than yourself, you'll never be satisfied. Everything that you do has become the bare minimum for yourself and it is to be expected. How is something like that supposed to bring you gratification? I too, was in your situation. I desired a solution to my numb life. After a long pursuit of research, I had finally discovered my answer; that crave for danger that you call stupid, is the solution."

I stare at him and process every word. "How can you be certain?" I press. He stares at me with amusement. "That rush of adrenaline you felt from a near death experience was amazing wasn't it? What if I told you that if you felt that on a daily basis, it would cure your unwanted emotions..." I look at him intrigued. "And it actually works?" I questioned.

"Indeed; I started doing it two weeks ago. I assure you it does, otherwise I wouldn't have decided to live another day. But I'd be lying if I didn't tell you that this method could be improved, it would be more enjoyable with a companion. If you got guts, you should try it with me."

I think momentarily. "Was that the reason why you were laying lifelessly in the middle of the parking lot?"

"Yes." he answers, "However, that isn't nearly as dangerous of the things I plan to do. You must understand I was limited."

This entire concept seemed new to me, I was disturbed, yet,

fascinated by it all. I wanted to try it, I haven't felt life in me since the ice skating incident- and that was five months ago. America recognizes that I sit in silence. He speaks up once again. "So, what do you say?"

I was all in. I slammed onto the breaks making us both jerk forward. Shortly after, a shatter can be heard in the trunk. I looked over to America. "We start this weekend." I tell him.

He smirks at me, satisfied at my response. "Good answer. I will soon explain everything to you then." I nod.

The vehicle was then filled with silence. I decided to break the ice, this time, figuratively and not literally. "America, I have expressed to you my past and feelings, I feel it is only fair if you do the same." He looks at me with complete surprise. "Seriously? Are you sure you want to hear my nonsense?"

"Yes." I reply, "I'm curious. You say that we are similar, prove it to me."

"Okay..." he inhales and exhales before he begins his long tangent.

"High expectations were pressed onto me since I was an innocent child. Both of my parents were respected and well known people in the community. They would tell me that every action I did, reflected their parenthood. However, I have always wanted to do my own thing. They feared that my disobedience would ruin their image. They refused to send me to school with all the other normal boys and girls. I was homeschooled. As you could imagine, my live became very boring. I begged them to let me live a normal life. My father quickly refused but my mother felt pity in her heart and said that if I could learn to behave better, they might consider it.

It was my only hope at the time to ensure I could have a better life. I gave in. Within the next few months, I was on my best behavior and I proved to them that I was more than capable to succeed in my education. After awhile, I realized I didn't have to try as hard when learning. I was blessed to have it come naturally to me. They were most certainly impressed. My father then strived to teach me how to play the piano. I payed close attention to learn it because I

believed that if I succeeded in this, I could finally go to school and make friends.

The loneliness was a pure pain. I had no one to speak to but my parents, I obviously couldn't share all my thoughts and my feelings with them. I had to show them that I was completely flawless; and my true self definitely was far from perfect. Even if I did feel comfortable enough to talk with them, they would never give me the time of day to listen. I resorted to writing all my thoughts in a journal so I wouldn't lose my sanity.

Eventually, my three younger brothers came into the picture. It was an interesting time because I couldn't wait for them to grow old so I could play with them. The idea made me excited. I helped my mother and father when it came to raising them. I soon finished my elementary years and now they were old enough to communicate with- well they were toddlers so I was limited. But I enjoyed their company and we got along well. Canada was the closest to my age and the twins Australia and New Zealand were not too far behind. With them being around, it made me accept being homeschooled and I no longer had a desire to attend a school.

Of course, nothing lasts forever. I'll never forget the day my father shattered my heart. He decided to send my three younger brothers away to school. I thought I would be included in it but I wasn't. I argued and told him that I was smart and could play piano very well when my younger siblings could not. He told me that my younger siblings have been well behaved children since birth and that they didn't worry him in the slightest. My mother told him doing this to me was unfair and would argue with him about it everyday. He would not budge. When our last argument on the issue had ended, I dumped all of my father's beloved tea bags into the toilet and left it there. The bathroom had never smelt better.

I have never felt so much rage in my heart. The tea dumping did not satisfy my hatred. He was never going to let me attend school. I had nothing, I was lonely and had nothing to look forward to in my life. That night when the clock struck midnight, I snuck out of my room to the living room where the piano sat. Out of my pocket, I removed a box of matches, I take one out and swipe it on the cover. A small flame emerges on the piano. I sit down, adjust myself, and I

play the most aggressive piece I know. The more I play, the more it catches fire. Soon, the smoke alarm goes off. It awakens my entire household and my parents come rushing downstairs.

They gasp in horror at the scene I have created in front of them. I continue to play, ignoring them, and I feel a smile crawl on my face. My father scrambles to the fire extinguisher and my mother tries pulling me off the seat. I play as the keys start to sound more and more disoriented.

My father puts out the fire and yanks me out of the seat. I am scolded by both of my parents but I don't remember every single thing they said. I think my mother said something along the lines of wishing to cut my head clean off my neck and my father had stated he wanted to lynch me. Despite their awful desires, I was too distracted at what I had done. It felt eye opening- a true wonderful feeling. I find myself smiling in the presence of their muffled yells. My father then slaps me to where my eyes tear. It brings me back to reality. They yell some more before dragging me into a closet. They lock me in there. It is dark and I bang on the door for them to let me out. However, I soon stop because I knew I was well deserving of it. I remember leaning against the closet door and then hearing my father complaining some more. He had discovered his expensive tea in the toilet, I forgot that I had did that. I couldn't control the laugh that escaped from my lips.

The next day my parents took me to the doctor. I didn't know what kind of doctor it was at the time but looking back at it, they tried to stick me into an asylum. I had explained to the doctor of everything that had happened. After a 30 minute session, the doctor revealed the results to my parents. I was claimed to not be insane thankfully. The doctor had charged them a large fee only to tell them to enroll me into public school.

Soon before I knew it, I was going to school. I was beyond happy. I had made plenty of friends and I ensured to stay clear of trouble and do very well in my studies. I wanted to show my parents they truly had nothing to worry about. I didn't exactly realize of how advanced I was compared to everyone else. School just came easy to me. One day my parents got a phone call from the school. They were fearful I had done something again, but they were wrong.

They were told that I had to be put in harder courses. This made them overjoyed.

I thought that this is what I really wanted but it took a turn for the worse. My parents then feared that I would somehow get kicked out from the classes. I was baffled- I had just proved to them that I was more than capable and yet, they still doubted me. It hurt a lot. My other siblings started doing really well in their studies as well. I have not a memory of them being doubted by my parents. I used to have a good relationship with my siblings when I was younger but my parents kept me away from them as best as they could. They didn't want me to influence them to do bad things. My parents had brainwashed them into avoiding me. We still cared about each other, however, we were not close and barely spoke to one another.

Because I was put into new classes, I was separated from my friends. I had to make new ones; the new ones were okay but... they were very competitive. Untrustworthy pieces of shits- I had to adapt in order to survive. I befriended many, however, I promised to never let my guard down around them. So I crafted a few false personalities to help me. Everyone thought I was a comedian and liked being around me. Because of my funny nature, they didn't see me as a threat and got less competitive with me. I knew all these friendships were temporary- yet, it was better than what I had while being homeschooled. Overall, I made the best of it and had a good time.

My school allowed their students to play instruments, of course, I played the piano. I was the only one that did; my school didn't offer a course in piano and only had one piano for the music instructor. We would share that one. Everyone else was in band or orchestra. I remember kids would ask me to teach them but I declined. Only I was allowed to be special, I loved the spotlight and attention. And no one of my knowledge took that personal.

There were many times I would be a soloist and would play pieces for school concerts. Especially when I was in middle school. The girls would swoon over the funny smart hot boy who could work a piano. Sadly, I could never return their feelings because I was not vulnerable to love. I just couldn't find anyone attractive- their personalities were basic. Only someone worthy was deserving of

me; and I deserved so much better. Plus I knew that they only liked me for my looks and knew not a single thing about me.

I would sometimes sing while playing the piano too; I thought I had a pretty decent voice. My school wanted me in chorus but I thought of that to be a little extra and declined. It was all fun until I started to grow restless and bored of it all. I wouldn't give it up, it was just I needed a new flavor in my life.

In high school, I wanted to sign up for sports. So I joined my school's baseball team, I used to play all the time in my backyard. I remember my father would grow annoyed pitching the ball to me. When I had told my parents I was trying out for the team, they were upset. They believed it would distract me from my studies.

Their restrictions were irritating me, I knew it was mainly my father. He told me not to try out for that team, I disobeyed and did it anyways. I had made the team and was more than happy. I had no choice but to reveal it to my parents. My father was beyond shocked that I even made the team, I felt offended by that but he soon confessed to me that he had bribed my coach to not let me on that team.

I was extremely upset to learn this. I hated having such an unsupportive family. I remember yelling at him of how unfair it was. Canada was smart like me and he was allowed to be apart of many clubs and play hockey. Why couldn't I? My father explained to me that I had always had "behavioral problems".

I remember yelling some more that I haven't been a problem in years since the flaming piano incident. I guess that memory would forever stain their brains. I wanted to regret it, however, if I had never did it I wouldn't have been enrolled in school.

After my yelling outburst and what felt like hours worth of arguing, my father threatened to remove me from school and to homeschool me again if I didn't quit the team. After that, he dismissed me and I ran to my room.

I had come to the realization that I had no choice but to quit the team- sike! I went to my room and I packed all my shit. I didn't like

it here so I would run away.

Well I wasn't really running away, I wasn't an idiot. I would never be financially stable if I did that. My parents never even let me work a job before. Luckily, I was cunning and deceitful. I decided to fool them into thinking I ran away, I would hide in the attic for the week and leave them a letter.

That night I had constructed the most moving letter. I write it in my best script and I left it on the kitchen counter. I had stated everything I wanted improved in my life; such as more freedoms and to be treated fairly amongst my siblings. After I placed the letter, I raided my kitchen of food. I put the food in a plastic bag and I went to my room to get the rest of my belongings. I made sure to use a VPN to put me in a random location.

I quietly made my way to the attic and I hide inside. I remember it being dark and cold, other than that, it was pretty cool up there. I had my sleeping bag, food, and an outlet to charge my phone. What more could I want? The next day I heard my parents panicked to the max. They first tried to call me but I decline all 56 of their calls. Then when I heard them call the police, I knew I took it too far. Now I was slightly afraid to leave. I then reminded myself of the way they treated me and the reason of why I was there in the first place. They had this coming. I then decided to text my parents; I told them I would only return home if they had promised to fulfill my simple requests. They had no choice but to give in.

So I immediately climbed out of the attic with my things feeling satisfied. They felt stupid when they realized I have been there the entire time. Although they didn't yell at me; instead they hugged me- it took me by surprise. I felt nothing from their affections. My parents were dead to me. I had build such an underlining hatred for them. I no longer had a tolerance for them. Seeing them worried made me feel good inside. The thought of me running away and never returning scared them and I liked that.

Well maybe they should start panicking because the boy they grew never did return. Something else came out of the attic that day; they were never going to see their America again. Although, they had it coming. Later when authorities showed up, I remember being

questioned by them about the whole incident. Nothing serious happened.

After all that, I finally got my freedom and the life I deserved. It was all perfect or so I thought; it felt completely empty... I wish it weren't this way. I have fought for this happy ending my entire life but it wasn't enough. Something had to be wrong with me. How can one live for nothing? Feel numb all of the time? Not a single thing to look forward to? It kept me up at night. I couldn't stand the feeling of emptiness. I began to dedicate my days to researching; I couldn't find the answers I was looking for. My days kept growing more and more miserable- the void within me thickened.

Deprived of all hope...I...I attempted suicide. Obviously, it wasn't successful- surprisingly, it was a blessing.

I had opened my bedroom window on the third floor and I plunged out. While falling in the air, I felt fear and yet, amusement. I don't know how to describe it but I finally felt something anew! I held onto this feeling. I wanted to feel it again. I remember aiming for the large bushes when I fell. It broke my fall and I landed on top of my parents car in the end. It had set the car alarm off so I quickly climbed back up to my window to avoid being caught. I was injured- nothing major, I had to pursue my researching about the adrenaline I felt. That night, I got no sleep. I still remember the sounds of the computer mouse clicking. I had discovered a few answers and I had to experiment. The next day would mark the start of me doing dangerous things to test the feeling.

One of these tests was, I had blindfolded myself and waited at the sidewalk for the light to turn green. When I heard vehicles approached, I crossed the street. The vehicles slammed on their brakes and cursed me out. However, I paid no mind to it. I was too busy enjoying the thrill. It was all I wanted. I needed to hold onto these feelings. I had made it across the street unharmed. And so, for the past two weeks I have been doing dangerous stunts. It's so nice to feel again. I won't lie, it gets repetitive when you're the only player. I still enjoy it, call me insane for being so desperate for doing something I love..."

"You're insane." I say.

Backwards Bill

America glances back over to me with a menacing grin plastered onto his face. He laughs and its echo haunts my ears. "I don't think I'm insane; surely my entire situation is understandable. If it weren't, I would've been put into that asylum when I was younger."

I stare into his doe mismatched colored eyes. What the hell did I get myself into? "America, you are insane." I repeat. I was truly at a loss for words and had conflicting emotions. Crossing the street blindfolded was the last thing I had expected him to try. And yet, I was even more disturbed at how much I wanted to try it for myself...

"And so are you, Russia." he says chillingly as if he had a key to my gated mind. "We are not so different and you know it. You are not normal; you revealed that to me in your past. Our horrible childhoods molded us into what we are today. "

"I'm not fucking crazy." I tell him, "I find hobbies to feel alive- not to try to kill myself!"

"Yeah?" he questions, "Do you know what I find crazy? The fact you stopped driving. We have been sitting in the middle of the road for the past few minutes. I was hoping for a car to rear-end us... but I figure that you deserve for that to be brought to your attention."

I stare at the wheel in distress and then back at him. I know for a fact that he was not trying to convince me that I was crazy- the fucking nerve. I continue to drive again. "Everyone knows that no one drives on this road past 10 p.m. anyway!" I say.

"Do you really believe that?"

"Yes." I say confidently.

"Then drive backwards." he says with his menacing grin returning. I stare at him bewildered. "B-Backwards?"

I see him lose patience. He reaches over and switches my gears to reverse. I start driving backwards. He laughs wickedly. I slam onto the breaks and push him back into his seat. "What the fuck is wrong with you?!" He only continues to laugh.

"Oh c'mon!" he states between his laughs. "We were really doing it! I bet you never did that before!"

"Of course I haven't!" I say enraged. "Are you trying to get us killed?"

"Maybe." His word drips with amusement.

"America, I don't think I can do this. It all seems wrong. I'm backing out of our deal." I tell him. His idea sounded interesting at first, but seeing its potential nearly scared me to death.

He speaks with a worried tone. "Russia please, I ca-" I cut him off. "I'd feel more comfortable if you rode in the backseat."

"Fine..." he begins. "I respect your wishes of wanting to continue on with your life... you know, the life that's dulling and will forever feel empty. And here I offered you an opportunity to rid these horrible feelings; I even offered you friendship, and an escape from being numb. Might I ask what the hell you are living for? Why are you fighting to live when you have nothing? Are you happy?"

His words broke me. It was all true. Nothing gave me purpose anymore. My distracting hobbies were dying out and were failing to entertain me. I don't know how much longer I can keep this up. I looked over to him in defeat without saying a word.

"Please Russia, give me a chance. I can help you. We are the same; I've longed to meet someone like you. Let me give you something to make you want to wake up every morning from your bed."

I hesitate. My throat feels like it is burning me. It tells me that agreeing to this is a bad idea. As foreboding as it was, I felt that I did not have much of a choice. I wanted to feel again, like that time when I was close to dying on the ice. To feel that constantly made my stomach stir. Was it nervousness? Anxiousness? I feel my head

nodding.

"Okay... I'll do it." I say. He smiles at me in satisfaction. "Thank you, I'm glad you reconsidered." He touches my gears again and switches it to drive. "I'm sorry, I definitely did get too ahead of myself before. We won't start until the weekend."

"I'm not waiting..." I will try it again. I put my hand on top of his and switch the gear back to reverse. "Are you sure you want to do this now?" he questions.

"Does a wet bear shit in dry woods?" I ask.

He looks at me baffled. "Uh what?"

"Yes, I'm doing it." I rephrase. I step on the gas and we begin to go backwards. Once I feel comfortable of the controls I speed up. I press further and further on the peddle until we are speeding.

America rolls down his window and shouts with joy and laughter. I join in. Oh this is a lot of fun. Why must this dangerous doing be the thing to bring me this feeling. I roll down all the windows, it's something about the loud harsh smacking wind that feels great. America takes his seatbelt off and sticks his head out the window. I take my seatbelt off and I decide to start drifting backwards. The car tires screech as I drifted them on the road.

America was smiling from ear to ear. He reminded me of a puppy who likes to have their head out the window during car rides. My eyes were then glued to the mirror as I navigated backwards on the road. We see head lights approaching us.

"Woohoo!" America screams. "Chase em Russia!" So I stop drifting and go after the car in reverse. As I shorten the distance between us, I soon see their gears switch. The car behind us was now fleeing from us backwards.

"Yeehaw!" America begins to laugh hysterically and so do I. I feel it- the amazing feeling he was talking about. I feel it pumping through my veins. I proceed my pursuit of the unfortunate vehicle behind us. We chase them until they fall into a ditch. We laugh at them

being stuck and we continue to drive backwards. How unfortunate for them. Maybe we should turn around, apologize, and help them? Before I can fully consider this thought, America's crazy ass climbs out the window and climbs on top of my car.

"Bet you can't make me fall off!" he yells. Oh this is a horrible idea... I think I like it. I start swerving the car around to make him fall off. America surfs on top and taunts me. "Your driving is shit!"

It pisses me off so I hit the breaks. I hear him stumble but he still remains above me. He starts complaining. "Why'd you stop? Did I hurt your wittle feelings?" he mocks.

I climb over the back seat and grab the heavy base part of the broken lamp. I put it on the gas pedal and my car begins to move backwards at full speed once again. Perfect. I open my sunroof and climb out to confront America. He looks at me bewildered. "Wait who the fuck is driving?"

"Don't worry about it!" I say. I then run to him and push him. The rain sure did make it slippery up here. He stumbles and almost falls off the car. As he regains his balance he laughs wickedly. "I knew you had it in you!" He makes his way back towards me and tries to push me off this time. Before he can lay a finger on me, I grab his hands and interlock our fingers. We begin to wrestle each other. He then bursts out laughing and I let out a laugh too as I look into his eyes. He then swept me with his foot and I fall onto the roof of the car. I pull him down with me so now he pins me to the car. He reveals a devilish smirk and leans in to whisper in my ear. "You impressed me tonight cutie. I think you might be overqualified..." His words were chilling and I felt my stomach sloshing once again. The wind smacking my face no longer felt cold, it burned. I find myself throwing him off of me. He laughs while laying on the car. Something about it felt weird; he was too close for comfort. And I hate anyone who oversteps my boundaries. I sit up and am reminded that we were on a moving car. I noticed we were no longer on the road, we were in a field of grass. Alarmed, I make my way to the roof window. But my car slows down and comes to a stop before completely shutting down.

"Aw... you ran out of gas!" America pouts.

"What? I just filled this up a few days ago!" I say. Perhaps the lamp piece came off the pedal. I slide through the sunroof and back into my seat. I bend down and see that the broken lamp base was still pressed on the pedal. When I pick my head back up, I am nearly scared to death by America. My eyes widened and I let a small gasp escape from my lips. He hangs upside down from the sunroof like a bat and stares at me. "Want me to call to have it towed?"

I regain my composure. "N-No... it sounds expensive." He dangles his arms. "Are you sure?" He taps on the gas tank meter. "It's far past empty."

"I am sure." I say confidently. "If we ask to get it towed, we run the risk of getting into trouble. The car we scared into that ditch might have already reported us to the police."

"So you'd rather push...the car!?"

"Than go to jail? Yes. I'd prefer that 100%." I grab him by the shirt and pull him in close. "We can't get locked up yet- we are just getting started."

He bares his teeth into a smile. "I like the way you think." he compliments. "May I offer a bit of advice though?"

I raise an eyebrow inviting him to proceed. "If I were you, I'd let go of me or else you are going to have to pucker up..." he flirts. I roll my eyes and push his face away; letting go of his shirt in the process. He laughs before disappearing back onto the roof. I watch him slide off the hood of my car and he walks over to my open window. "C'mon princess, help me push your carriage to the gas station." I lock my eyes with him. "Stop being gay." I tell him. He looks like he was trying to hold back a laugh. "No!" he chimes with an annoying enthusiastic tone. I grit my teeth. "I wasn't asking..." I threaten.

He begins to walk behind the car. "When..." I get out of my car and follow him with an answer. "Just now, are you dens-"

"...did I ask?" he interrupts. Oh I see what he did; "You little shit!" I say. He only replies in laughs. "Lighten up buttercup!" he jokes. We

begin to push my car out of the grasslands. "Tell that to the car." I say. He chuckles. We continued to talk a bit more; however, the further we pushed, the more tired we grew and we lost the energy to speak. All you could hear was us out of breath and the tires crunching the concrete below us.

I'd say it took us an entire half hour to push the car to a gas station. It was late and not a soul was around to pump the gas for us; I'd rather do it on my own anyways. I dig my hand into my pocket to search for my wallet. I look up for one second and the American was no longer at my side. I dart my eyes everywhere in a slight panic wondering where the fuck the little asshole went.

He had snuck around to the gas pump and already inserted his credit card into the machine. He makes eye contact with me. "I figured I owed ya."

"O-Oh..." I stammered. "Thanks." The gesture was nice, no one ever paid for my gas before except father. Yet again, I don't drive people anywhere. I take my hand out from my pocket and I turn the car on to be able to see the gas meter move. After America pays, he holds the gas filler and stares at it for a moment. "This stuff is very flammable..." He inserts it into my car. I look over to him knowing exactly what he was thinking. "No." I say agitated. He laughs, "Relax man, it was just an observation." Knowing his history with arson, I knew it was no joke. I tighten my eyes into thin lines to show him I could see past his bullshit. I give him this look for awhile as he fills my car. He smiles weakly and shuts my little gas door and returns the gas pump to where it belongs without saying a word. Glad he got the message. I relax my face and he walks to the passenger door.

The moment I get into the car, he is leaned on the car's middle console gazing at me. What a fucking weirdo. "What?" I ask him sounding annoyed. He has a glint of interest in his eyes."You don't blink when you're angry."

"Huh?"

"Blink motherfucker! Blink!" he shouts before falling into another one of his laughing fits. And to think we were in fact similar. How

ironic... I watch as I wait for him to finish; being sure to blink this time around. When he calms down he apologizes for his irrational behavior, although, I knew he wasn't that sorry to discontinue it completely. I look at my gas tank meter, satisfied to see it was filled. Before I start driving, I figured I'd ask to see where America lived.

"What's your addre-"

"Can we exchange phone numbers?" he interrupts. "No." I say immediately; annoyed that he had cut me off. He begins to pout. "Aw why not? How are we supposed to make the plans to meet this weekend?" I roll my eyes.

"I could give you it but I won't ever reply back; I barely use my phone."

"Liar!" He objects. I cock my eyebrow up. "How so exactly?" I had no one to call or text on my phone; so what was he going on about?

"Well, when we were in school you would listen to your music all the time! And for that, you need your phone."

"That's fucking different!" I complain. "Is it?" he counters. "Yes!" I say with aggression. He lets out a chuckle. "What does it mean then to you to use your phone?" Shit, more of his annoying questions which seem to throw me off. "Um to use it for communication purposes?" I say as if he were oblivious. "Oh honey, I know your phone is dryer than an old hag's vagina." He then bursts out laughing and I look at him baffled. I'm starting to find it irritating that he laughs at his own jokes. I found it to be weird. But, he wasn't wrong, I can't remember the last time I've gotten a message.

I guess it wouldn't kill me to give him my phone number. If it takes a turn for the worse, I can block him easily. When he calms down, I accept his request. "Fine, I've decided that I'll give you my number." His eyes light up and I swear they are sparkling. "Yay!" he cheers, "Could you write it down for me? My phone is dead..."

"Ah...right." I say. I look around my car and start opening up compartments. "Uh, I don't think I have a pen or paper." Right at

that moment, I find a pen and hold it up. "Oh... never mind." America then sticks his arm out to me. "How about you just write it on my arm, I doubt you'll find some paper." I look at his pale limb, his arm wasn't entirely skinny, he definitely had some muscle built up in him. I hesitate before holding his arm and I begin to write.

"Hey you can write bigger than that... if it's too small, I'll forget it's there!" I sigh. "Okay..." I sketch each number larger for his stupid ass.

He stares at me the entire time I do this. I refuse to look up at him and make eye contact; I keep my eyes glued on his arm. But I should've known that his creepy demeanor was him only being curious. "Are you left handed?" he asks. That explains the staring I guess. "Ambidextrous actually." I tell him. He smiles from ear to ear. "That's so fucking cool." A smile of my own crawls on my face. I lift the pen from his arm to reveal my number. He observes the writing before lowering his arm.

"Now where do you live?" I ask. Soon before we knew it, we were parked alongside his house. His home was beautiful and grand- yet, it had a darkness to it. No light emitted from inside and there were no lights to make his sidewalk glow. It probably looked more welcoming in the day time. America opens the passenger door and steps out. Before he closes the door, he squeezes in a few last words. "Thanks for everything man!" he glares to his right before fixating his eyes upon me. "I look forward to our little partnership." He delivers his line with a sincere wink before shutting the door. I couldn't bring myself to speak any words, I was feeling conflicted. The best reply I could offer was raising my left hand to wave to him.

On my way back to my residence, I pondered the entire time. The American was for sure strange- quirky; but I believed it was his odd personality that reeled me in. I have never encountered anyone to behave like him. He was unique. Being around him made me feel as if I knew him for years. He was relaxed and was the comic relief in the atmosphere. His presence was so pleasing it started to frighten me. I can't make any friends now, it was awful timing. Befriending him will only make me go backwards in my life- I can't go backwards. I am not a foolish mouse about to fall for a pretty

mouse trap. I know the consequences of having people in my life. I have not a single good memory of it being beneficial. It only brings disappointment. Yet again, if I was so sure, why was I lecturing myself? Who was I trying to convince?

And soon, I was jiggling my keys into the door. All the lights in my house were off; father had to have been sleeping- thank the Lord. I creak open the door as if I were a burglar. They are lucky that I wasn't. I take one step and I create an obnoxious sound. I stepped on the lamp that my father had broke earlier. I freeze to make sure that it didn't wake anyone up. Luckily, I heard no sounds following after mine. I crept even more carefully into the room I sleep in. It's a pretty basic living space; I got a bed, a dresser, a nightstand, a desk, and a closet. I never thought to decorate it; there isn't really a point to.

After I had prepared myself to rest, I lay in my bed and close my eyes to start my slumber. Normally, whenever I go to sleep, I hope I awaken somewhere else or not at all. But tonight, I had something to live for.

Day of Inauguration

The weekend crept up on me like I was prey. However, the joke is on them because I accept danger with open arms. At least, that was the mindset I was trying to have in order to prepare myself for today. Mixed with fear, was excitement. Knowing that there was a high chance I may not return to this bedroom later made my time seem more valuable. I hear the sound of plates clattering downstairs; guess my sisters are making lunch. I had already eaten though, cereal bars tend to suffice. I flick my light switch off and I make my way downstairs. Father was passed out on his chair in the living room. I sigh when I come to the conclusion that he had been drinking again. What a loser. Vodka couldn't be that good...

I leave my house without saying a word and head to my car. I start it up and proceed to drive to my destination. Early this morning, America texted me 5:55 on the dot. I don't think I want to know why he was up that early. And it's not like he put a casual "hey" or at least tell me who he was; all I get is a random address from an unknown number. How fucking ominous of him. However, being that I only have 5 phone numbers saved in my phone and no one else texts me in general, I knew it was him. His stupid ass didn't even put a time. So he better not complain that I show up past noon.

I arrive to a small abandoned building; it had vines and shrubs growing on the side of it. Not a single car was parked near it. What a sad desolated place; was America really in here? Why did he choose this place; he better not try to murder me or I'll beat his scrawny little ass.

As I make my way to the front door, I hear muffled music. I knock on the door and wait for a reply; I received none. I attempt to open the door and to my surprise it was unlocked. I step inside and I scare the birds that were perched above the wood planks on the ceiling. It was a well lit place. The walls had giant windows that emitted a golden light. I could see dust particles dancing in the

sunlight. The floor softly creeks as I advance in my steps. I hear the music more clearly now, it was coming from another room. I follow the sound and see America playing the piano in a giant empty room. He keeps his eyes closed as he plays his classical music; not even acknowledging me. He was so fucking weird. I watch him play, his face was softened and he seemed to completely be at peace. It was welcoming. I walk over to him and call his name. "America?" He only continues to play. I sigh and feel myself start to get comfortable. I sit below him as I wait for him to finish.

He finally opens his eyes and glances over to me with a smile. He stops playing and begins to play a tune I was too familiar with. Chopin's Nocturne No. 20 in C-Sharp Minor. I feel butterflies increase in my stomach by every piano key he presses. I remember when father taught me how to dance to this; America was playing this song on purpose. He expected me to know it. I arise to my feet; if it's a show he wants, it'll be a show he gets.

I stretch and begin to ballet dance to his playing. It felt so freeing. I dance around the piano and I feel his eyes watch me in wonder. I've never danced in front of anyone before, it felt a little uncomfortable but I sort of always wanted to do it. We somewhat had aligned interests so I didn't feel as embarrassed. It felt safe and judgement free. It was nice to have someone with the same taste appreciate my performance. I soon hear his keys sounding more and more emotional. So to keep up; I allow the music to control me. It possesses me and I dance my little heart out. I close my eyes and envision to be somewhere else. The song is slow; yet, powerful. I don't wear my proper shoes, it causes my feet and toes to start to hurt. I ignore the pain and proceed to dance.

His playing comes to an end so I wrap up my dance. He stares at me with a warming smile and he fills the air with an applause. "You're a natural." he says. I bow with a small smile. America stands up and leans against the piano. "I was waiting seven hours for you to show up."

"You never told me what time I had to show up; that's on you." I spit without an ounce of remorse.

"I know." he chuckles, "I needed a few hours to figure out how to

get this piano in here." I stare at him baffled. No fucking way did he bring that piano here. "Why... why would you do that?" I ask.

"I wanted to. I claimed this abandoned building to be mine a few hours ago. I only wanted to make it feel more at home." he says stupidly.

"So you decided to get a piano?" I say trying to understand his logic. "Wait...last time I saw you, your friends stole your car. Did you get it bac-"

"I pushed the piano all the way from my father's house." he interrupts. I stare at him with an increasing amount of distress; I was incredibly baffled at his action- it didn't make any sense to me as to why he went through the trouble to do all of this. He was literally complaining about pushing my car to the gas station! He notices that I am speechless and decides to keep talking. "...I also had nothing better to do. I figured it would be a fun little activity to keep me busy while I waited upon your arrival." I still stare at him with disbelief, unable to find the right words to string together. I throw my hands up in frustration and walk in the other direction. He only chuckles.

This man was crazy. It's about a 15 minute drive from here to his house so I couldn't imagine of how long it took him to push the piano here. And plus, I'm sure his parents will be furious if they find out that he did this.

"Russia?" he calls, "Shall we start the inauguration now?" I turn and cock up my eyebrow. "Inauguration? For what?" I question. He smiles and takes a few steps towards me. "We need to make a pact for what we plan to partake in together."

"So it's like sealing the deal?" I question. "Precisely..." he says while revealing a sharp beautiful dagger. I take two steps back from him. What was he planning on doing with that? His ass better put that away before he hurts himself. He holds the knife to the palm of his hand. "May we be-" he his cut off by his phone ringing obnoxiously. He lowers the knife and groans to the high heavens. I believe this is the first time I've seen him this annoyed. He looks at his phone and then back at me. "Excuse me for a moment, I have to take this." I

nod my head to show my understanding. He takes a few steps away from me and turns around. I hate to feel like I'm eavesdropping, but it wasn't like I could tune out his conversation.

"Hello?" he answers in the most cheery voice, "Yeah, I'm actually busy right now. Can I call you back?... What?... Well how long are you planning on keeping my car? I could get you guys in a lot of trouble... I'm not going anywhere to pick it up, you're bringing it to me..." His voice masked his irritation. I could tell he was losing patience based on the way he played with the knife in his fingers. He must be on the phone with the friends who took his car. If it were my friends, I would've threatened them to the core. I could barely handle people stealing my food, picturing myself in America's situation made me beyond frustrated.

"...Don't make me come and get it..." he warns on the phone. I watch a growing smirk appear on his face. "...fine." he whispers into the phone before hanging up. He then throws the knife into the wall and exhales with a shaky breath. "Sorry about that Russia, we can continu-"

"Why did they take your car in the first place?" I interrupt. He sighs, "They think it's funny for some reason. I'm the fifth wheel of the group so they think it's an appropriate joke to take away four of my wheels. It's annoying but I'll get my car back soon."

I get angry for him; his friends were douche bags. It's probably good that I don't have any friends because I couldn't handle something like this. "You need to get revenge so they never do this again."

"They're just kids." he says. "They aren't as mature as us; pranks and teasing are for children who are needy of attention. If I do anything, I'll be giving them exactly what they want."

"Well, children must also be taught lessons to learn from their mistakes. You can never expect them to mature without lessons." I say back. America looks at me with a smile realizing I was right. He pulls the dagger out of the wall and tucks it away. "You're right."

Soon before I knew it, we were no longer in the abandoned building. We were walking down the sidewalk carrying boxes of

fireworks. America suggested that we give them a show inside their house. He's fucking crazy, but I loved the idea and went along with it.

Apparently, his "friends" were hanging out at Japan's house and planned to have a sleepover. America told me that he was invited but he already had plans; me. A sleepover always sounded like such fun, I could only imagine what it would be like...-but what was a sleepover without fireworks? We now stood in front of the targeted house. You could hear that they were blasting music. It was almost too perfect.

America pointed to a beautiful ruby sports car in the driveway. "That's mine!" he said. He circled his vehicle and let out a sharp gasp. "Shit... no way, they scratched it!" I walked over to see his view. The scratch stretched all the way from the driver's door to the gas tank. "Now that's just wrong." I say with anger boiling in my stomach. America says nothing; I can feel hatred radiating off of him. He marched over to the front door and places the boxes of fireworks on the ground. He took out his keys from his pocket and revealed a lock picker on the key chain. He fiddles with the lock until we hear a click. He quietly opens the door and gestures his head for us to go inside. We enter and shut the door behind us. The music comes from upstairs so that must be where they all are. America finds his car key dangling in the kitchen on a little hook above the sink. He takes it and stuffs it into his pocket.

"Let's set the fireworks up now." he says. I smile wickedly and start opening up the boxes. We set all the firework rockets in a straight line aimed at the staircase. I bet it's going to look so pretty going off. America kicks all the boxes with warning labels off to the side. He slips a lighter out from his pocket and tosses it to me.

"Can you light these up? I need to make a phone call." I catch the lighter with a nod.

With every dial sound his phone makes, I light a firework. Soon, the other end picks up. America speaks; "Hey, I took it upon myself to let me in your house and take back my car key. I don't appreciate what you guys did. And I saw what you did to my fucking car. So I'm downstairs right now and set up a little show for you guys. I

recommend you come check it out, it goes off at any second now." He hangs up. How sinister- his calm fluent demeanor masked his wicked insanity. I finish lighting the line of fireworks and the first one fires. We hear confused screaming and his friends come running; how unfortunate for them- they get caught in the pretty blast.

America starts laughing mischievously and I join in. I could get used to this. The house catches on fire as dreadful screams fill the air. What babies- they should have seen this coming. Keep playing with fire and you'll get burned. The fire alarms soon go off. America and I watch the show. He turns to me, "Now I think would be the perfect opportunity to do the inauguration." he tells me. I nod, "I couldn't agree more." America smiles and whips out his dagger. He holds it to his hand.

"May we be united until after death we part. Neither of us will cower from any given feat; we will endure everything as one. If one dies, the other must lose their life as well." He slashes the palm of his hand. It drips blood as he hands me the knife. "Do you accept?"

I take the knife from him and slash my own hand. "I accept." He grabs my bloody hand with his and we shake on it. The deal was sealed. The final firework blows lighting the room red. The home remains in ruins.

America and I flee from the scene; soon we are cruising in his red car.

He blast music with his tinted windows rolled down. We both were laughing as we recollected the bits of pieces of the catastrophe we created. America lowers his music and turns to me. "That was only revenge; we didn't even get into the real shit yet." I smile, "Well let's get on with it then." I could be agreeing upon my death right now without even knowing. I adore the suspense. And you know what? Fuck it. It's summertime and I have no desire to be at home. It's my turn to have some fun.

I watch as America smirks in the rear view mirror before speeding off to our next destination.

Except, it was just a regular ol' parking lot. He parks the car and I give him a baffled stare. "What are we doing here?" I ask. He exits his car without answering so I just follow. "Just trust me!" he calls to me. Yeah, that's not happening. I stop walking and wait until he realizes that I demanded an answer.

He walks a few more feet ahead of me. When he notices he can only hear his own footsteps and comes to a stop. He turns around and meets my eyes. I watch him sigh in defeat and he points upwards. "We are going to climb that cellular tower..."

I raise an eyebrow. "Isn't that beyond illegal?" America laughed. "And what we've been doing previously isn't?"

"I dont know, this seems more... far fetched." I try to explain as I hesitantly glance at the tower. I've seen these all the time, and yes, I have imagined myself climbing one- but I've never thought of actually doing it. One foot in the wrong place was instant tragic death.

"Okay, I understand where you are coming from. However, think of how accomplished you'll feel if you reach the top. Aren't you forgetting? Feel. The sole purpose of any of this is to feel." he persuades.

I slowly nod my head and continue to follow him. He was right; I was glad he reminded me of the purpose of all this. And I needed more purpose in my life. But I still can't shake off the feeling of how crazy it all seemed to me.

All my life I have been following rules and doing the right thing; I may come off as a jerk sometimes but I have morals. And America was almost everything against those morals.

And yet, there was a gravitational pull that forced myself to be in his presence. He should be the last person I associate myself with. Was this at all right? Or was I being an idiot for once in my life; did I really enjoy danger?

Past all the fences and the "No Trespassing" signs; We stood under the enormous tower like small wondering mice. America gazes upon

it with sparkling eyes; I gaze upon it with a tight lump in my throat. I sometimes wish I could stop overthinking this- when I had agreed on it, the idea was as sweet as lavenders. And now I felt those flowers beginning to wilt.

Before I could progress any further into my mind, America starts climbing fearlessly. Was it wrong that I expected him to get electrocuted? When he is about ten feet in the air and turns and stares down at me still implanted in the ground. "Russia?" he calls innocently.

I wear a dazed face as a thousand more thoughts race into my head. One slips out between my lips. "You are going to fall and fucking die..."

"I can survive steep falls, chill;
I always land on my feet without a hospital bill- Call me a cat if you will.
I have all my 9 lives still.
And we all know the first part of a particular Saying like a drill;
"Curiosity killed the cat." however, rarely do They ever mention the last fatal part so I shall Spill:
"But satisfactory brought it back." see the Thrill?"

Once again, I stare at this motherfucker like he donated 100 kidneys to a hospital- I was incredibly baffled. He smiles proudly at his own poetry but his expression evaporates when he sees I do not show the same in return. "Do you know what kind of cat you are?" he asks me.

I shake my head; "No, I am no feline of any-"

"A pussy!" he interrupts; he then falls into a laughing fit. I roll my eyes to the back of my head. Typical. Fucking typical America.

Now that I think about it, he was a very unpredictable man. He seemed to have mood swings but I could see that he generally can compose his emotions- except his laughter. He doesn't cry or get angry like a little bitch. His optimistic mindset only made him seem more mysterious- especially hearing his past, true feelings, and desires! How does he do it?

Was it wrong that I wanted to see him snap? What would even make someone like him snap? He likes danger and was even calm when he had learned of his friends scratching his car. I pondered about his past, actually now thinking of it- he seemed way more emotional in his past. Like a normal bratty teenager.

Comparing that behavior to what he is now didn't add up... fuck, I did it again. I over analyzed something unnecessary when clearly the answer is, America had just matured. He matured. Of course he isn't going to behave the same anymore.

Since this is the case, I guess there really was no way to make him snap.

"Russia!" America screams with fear in his voice. He hangs upside down on a rod holding on for dear life. "Help me!" he screams desperately. I feel my heart rate pick up and I climb the tower rapidly without hesitation. I didn't have it in me to allow anyone to plunge to their death, remember my morals? I think I'm too empathetic and that really conflicts with me hating everyone.

When I reach my hand out to America he laughs. He dangles from his arm like a monkey and was hysterically laughing at me. This asshole was completely fine. I stare at him with flummox and annoyance. I should've saw that coming.

He speaks in between his laughs. "I'm sorry, I'm sorry-I had to get you up here somehow!" His mocking words remind me to look down. A decision I immediately regret so I clench the rods tighter and forcibly look up. But seeing the vast tower above us made me shiver. It overwhelms me. I close my eyes temporarily to try to calm myself down and process all of this.

"Russia..." America coos teasingly, "I hope you aren't scared of your first challenge. Want me to hold your wittle hand?"

"Fuck off." I whisper in the wind.

"Good. Otherwise, that'd be embarrassing for you." I can see his stupid smirk even with my eyes shut.

I open my eyes and meet his. His are filled with amusement; mine were pissed the hell off. I start climbing the tower out of spite. Fuck America and his games.

I hear him following me closely behind. "Hey!" he barks, "you shouldn't be so pessimistic all the time." I roll my eyes. "Being optimistic will only make you more disappointed, trust me." I remind him. He counters, "Depriving all hope from your life is not a good life style." I know this motherfucker did not try to give me advice on life style. I snap my head to him. "And climbing a fucking cellular tower is?!" I question. "Well you're here with me so that doesn't really say much on your behalf!" I groan with annoyance. I swear, all that man did was vex me. "Suck a dick!" I yell. "Name a time and place baby!" he flirts. I start gagging with disgust. "What the fuck?" I find myself climbing faster as he laughs below me. I really need to watch what I say around him.

We were now about 70 feet in the air. Never thought that it was possible for me to be higher than a everyday pot smoker. "How tall is this tower?" I ask America. We both stop climbing and take a small break. "About 200 feet I think." he says out of breath. "Christ..." I say with an exhale. "Heh, just wait until we have to climb back down..." America reminds. "Fuck that, I think I might jump off." I say. America then groans out of nowhere. "I should've brought parachutes!" That would've actually been a good idea. "Yeah dumbass, why didn't you?" I question. He shrugs and continues climbing. I sigh and continue our pursuit.

Time passes and I can see we were almost at the top. I do not dare to look below me. I only look up; in the periwinkle colored sky from a distance, I see pretty pink clouds that crazily overlay each other. It reminds me of sweet cotton candy. But do not be fooled- only such beautiful clouds could mean one thing; a storm.

"America," I call, "we can't stay up here for too long, those are cumulonimbus clouds." I hear him sigh. "Well I'm sorry, it's not like either of us could check the weather anymore!" he says in a sarcastic tone. I exhale slowly with a sullen breath knowing damn well I was the one to convince him to delete the app in the first place. Why must everything come to bite me in the ass?

Soon America hangs from the tippy top. He wears a smile consisting of only pride. When I join him, I find that it is I who is smiling too. There is a bunch of strange equipment at the top. From afar, it appears to be small- I didn't envision it to be this large. It reminds me of that time of when I discovered how big traffic lights truly were... it still shocks me.

I remove my eyes from the actual tower and I indulged the view. Yes, it was absolutely terrifying of how high I was. However, it was gorgeous up here. The town we lived in wasn't the most appetizing, but from up here, I couldn't see the mole growing in the buildings or smell the disgusting rotting vehicle engines or the chewed gum plastered among the cracked sidewalks.

All the imperfections were not visible. We hung from the highest viewpoint of the town. Nothing surpasses us in height. I turn to America who was also taking in the sight. "It's beautiful up here." I say. He nods his head in agreement. "I think everything is more beautiful from far away, distance tends to hide flaws." he says.

"Definitely." I reply, he read my mind. Was it wrong that I did not want to leave from up here? It made me feel such light from inside, like I was an innocent child who climbed a tree for fun. The feeling from inside felt so nice. I place my hand on my chest hoping I could entrap it in my heart forever. America glances over to me. "You feel that too?" I nod my head silently.

"Yeah, being up here gives you so much motivation to want to see another day. It gives you hope that there could be so much more to life if you keep climbing and reaching for it. That there is truly a reason for you to stop everything and turn your life around into whatever you dream of it to be. Sometimes, you need to break away from society to feel this. So many unfortunate souls forget to do that and they plunge into a darkness they can never escape from. I feel sorry for them but it's not like I could convince them into climbing a cellular tower. They will die without ever knowing. Thankfully, that won't be us." he delivers with passion.

"I love when you convey your words into something so meaningful and inspirational. I'm starting to believe you are the only person worth listening to." I tell him. I could tell that he never gets to

speak this way with anyone else, they would never understand. But I understood crystal clear. I had no negative judgment of his words, I agreed with all of them. How safe it felt to speak with him. He only smiles to himself in satisfaction and we continue to speculate the world.

As we take in the scenery we dive into more deep conversation about our overall feelings towards life. We listen to each other fully without interruption. It was truly refreshing. I'd stay up here forever if I could- and for once, I didn't want to be alone. I was finding America's presence to be more pleasurable.

The more we progressed in conversation, the more the cumulonimbus clouds inched above us. The beautiful scenery was becoming obscure and made it appear to be night. Soon the world rumbles and it invades our only beautiful moment. I cursed the interloper. America and I glance at each other knowing it was time to go. We begin to climb down.

"In all honesty," he begins, " I was expecting to feel thrill and pure fear up here; but feeling the complete opposite definitely was a satisfying twist."

"I couldn't agree more. It made me feel a different type of alive though. I hope we can do this again." I tell him.

"Of course! We could even do it tomorrow if you'd like."

"Hm, I'll have to see how I'm feeling. I know all this damn climbing will make me sore in the morning."

"Oh yeah, good point..." he says. "Want to grab something to eat when we make it down?"

"Sure." I say, "What would you want to..." I find myself stopping mid sentence and I am no longer climbing down. I feel wrong, like I was being watched. All the hairs on my body were standing up. I feel staticky, like if someone were to touch me, I would shock them.

America notices the change in my mood. "Russia?" he asks sounding concerned. When I look over to him, all his hair was floating

around him. My heart drops to my stomach when I realize what was happening, I see America's face lose color when he realizes it too.

We were about to be struck by lightening.

"We need to get close to the ground now!" I say. I begin to climb down quickly but America doesn't move a muscle. "America!" I yell.

He leans all the way back while only relying on an arm and a foot to keep him on the tower. He smiles wickedly. "You can't outrun lightening; whatever happens, happens!" he says in a gentle amused tone. I saw fear instilled in him a moment ago, where did it all drain to?

"Fucking obviously but maybe it'll change targets if we are close enough to the ground. We are the highest things up here!" I remind.

"Waiting up here seems like more fun!" he chimes.

"Stupid idiot! We can't die now, we still have more things to do!" I say hoping it'll persuade him.

"Hm." he considers. "See you at the bottom then!" he lets go of the tower and begins to plunge to the ground.

I let out a horrifying gasp and catch him by his shirt collar. "You fucking idiot!" I yell. He smiles at me slyly as he begins to slip out of his shirt. "Give me your hand!" I say in a panic. He does; he hangs in the air dangling from my hand. I try my best to keep us both from falling. My fingers struggle to remain on the metal rails.

"Someone is slipping..." America teases from underneath me. It begins to rain and it worsens my attempt to hold on. Everything was becoming so slippery. I struggle to hold on. I couldn't climb down because I held America's hand. I was stuck with two options; hold on for dear life or let go.

"T-This isn't fair! Only you get to feel the thrill!" I yell at America, "Why can't you share it with me!"

"Then fucking let go." he says. It was as if his words have control of my fingers. I let go and I watch the tip of the tower grow smaller

and smaller.

Fatal Injury

Falling is a strange feeling. That weird feeling you get in the lower pits of your stomach is a chemical imbalance in your brain. Some people hate it, and others live for it. I was never a fanatic about it, however, the feeling numbs after awhile and it becomes easier to endure.

And once that feeling numbs, so does the feeling of fear. You just accept your possible death. The world moves in slow motion and for a second, you'll feel the most free you've ever felt. And quite frankly, that is how I'd like to spend my last few seconds on Earth. My legs and arms were fully extended outwards; one of my hands connected me to the American who was in the same position as me.

The wind smacks my face as the distance from the ground decreases. My eyes were tearing from such force, yet it would immediately dry every drop that slipped out from my eye. I look over to America. He wears a soft smile as we fall. He faces me when he feels my eyes fixated upon him. He holds his other hand for me to take.

I reach my right hand to grab his left hand. We gaze at each other as we fall; he still softly smiles and I can feel myself replicating it back. He then begins to move his hips causing us to spin to the left. He releases my hands from his grasp. "Close your eyes and lean back." he warns. I listen.

I soon feel my fall being broken by many thin branches. The consistent sounds of snapping fills the air. Leaves now smack my face instead of the wind. The sounds of the branches transform into a loud thud. I hear the sound more than I feel it. I lay on the ground looking up at the drizzling sky. Did I really survive a 200 foot fall? I lift my hand and place it onto my neck to still feel a beating pulse. I sit up while comforting my head. I felt like I had a million scratches and bruises on me.

In a small distance, I see America sitting on the ground grinning,

"Hey look, you're alive! This is great!" he chimes. I laugh at his ridiculous comment.

"You weren't lying about always landing on your feet." I say as I stand up. I brush my clothes, they were dirty and a bit torn.

"No kidding, although the impact did something to my ankle and it is now killing me." he admits. I limp over to him feeling all my wounds at once.

"Well, that is to be expected... we did fall off of a 200 foot cellular tower..." I remind. I extend a hand out to him to help him up. He holds his hand up to decline my assistance.

"Nah, I think I'll just lay here for awhile." he then collapses into the grass. What a piece of work. I roll my eyes with a grin plastered on my face and I sit beside him. It is quiet momentarily until I decide to reflect. "I was so scared of falling, I was holding onto that rail for dear life."

"Let me ask you something Russia..." I turn to give him my full attention. "Are you afraid to die?"

The question sat with great discomfort in me. Was I? "I... I don't know..." I tell him.

"Hm, I can't even tell myself." he says.

"At least I'm not alone then." I say feeling reassured. He then chuckles mockingly, "Oh, I meant for you. I discovered long ago that I was not afraid of death. I can't tell whether or not you fear it."

My face transforms into a catatonic stare. I was so done with him. Soon my brows become heavy as I stare at him. My silence can speak enough words for me. He lets out a small chuckle. "You still aren't blinking!" He falls into another laughing fit. What a damn psycho. I close my eyes and exhale forcefully. "America, go lay on a fucking highway." I mutter.

His small flamboyant laughs fill the atmosphere. I was starting to find it to be alluring. He lays on the ground with teary closed eyes as his chest rises and sinks with every escaping sound from his lips.

My bitter expression diminishes.

The boy too had his good share of wounds that coated his flesh. Some of his cuts still spill blood, although, the air did not contain that awful unwanted stench of iron. To have such faint wounds from a stunt so deadly was a blessing. It made me question; why did we deserve to live? We were practically flirting with death- surely, such fools who cast their lives away like dice did not deserve to wield another day. The sky perched above us flashes and emits a bright light outside. Being reminded of the lightening made me realize that the static sensation I felt a few moments ago has vanished completely. How different this scenario would have been if we were in fact struct. Luckily for us, God chose another target.

Every droplet that collided with my skin was starting to make me wince in pain. It burnt like if acid were poured onto my flesh. Ironically, there is acid in the rain- however, it has a very low pH level and isn't nearly as dangerous as... let's say- sulfuric acid. However, that does not exclude us from a possible risk of infection. We really should tend to our wounds. It'd be embarrassing if we fell ill due to a simple meaningless scrape. I soon hear America's laughing fit die down; finally.

"Hey, do you have tissues or wipes in your car? We need to take care of our injuries." I explain. He smiles cunningly, "Oh Russia, do you really think I would do all of this and be unprepared? I have a few first aid kits in my car." I smile with reassurance. "Of course you do..."

I arise to my feet and stretch. "Do you need help getting up now?" I asked. "Yeah, that'd be great thanks." he says in a somewhat sarcastic tone. I once again extend my hand out to him, the American latches on and shakily stands. I place his arm around my shoulder to assist in supporting his ability to walk. I was curious to know whether or not he had sprained, broken, bruised, or even dislocated his ankle. Which ever it was, I hope it has a timeless recovery. We both begin limping back to the lone parking lot and to the familiar scratched car. "Hey America?" I ask; "Hm?" he answers with a head turn; I continue to lay my opinion, "I think that scratch on your car looks cool." I say while gazing upon it in the distance, "It's like it has a scar." I thought it looked pretty sick- from afar, it

look like a cool design. He chuckles.

"I shall call it scar car!" he announces proudly. I cringe in my laughter, "That's so bad, shut up!" I demand. Once again, the boy falls into another laughing fit. I sigh in content with joy imbedded in my air.

Once we arrive to the car, America whips out his keys and unlocks it. He opens the backseat door and carefully crawls inside, I notice him trying to keep his ankle afloat. He digs around and pulls out a tiny first aid kit. He then props himself on the seat facing the door and opens it up. "Let me see... we will need band-aids, alcohol wipes, pain relief ointment..." he lists as he pulls each of them out. I watch him in a comfortable silence.

He uses a wipe to cleanse his wounds. He moves the wipe on his arm and legs. Some of his wounds fizz like soda. I knew what that pain felt like- I despised it. "Do you need any help?" I offer. I found it shocking that he would not flinch at the stings or find the need to blow on them. He looks at me with doe eyes, "Don't you have your own wounds to tend to?" he asks. I nod my head. "Well yes but I am in no rush."

I see a smirk grow on America's face. "Wow, are you really procrastinating with taking care of yourself?" he chuckles as he begins to rub ointment on his skin. I roll my eyes, "No... I don't want to be in your way, I'll wait until you are done." He chuckles to himself before replying with, "If you say so..."

"What the hell is that supposed to mean?" I question with annoyance. All the boy did was vex me. "You know it's going to hurt." he says confidently while ripping open band-aids. I roll my eyes. "Fucking obviously- it sure isn't going to tickle." I remind. "Aw, wittle pussy." he teases as he covers himself in band-aids.

"Dumbass, it was my idea to do this in the first place!" He shrugs stupidly and chuckles. "Calm down, fear can be fun." He then unexpectedly snaps out of his busy state and holds a wipe to my skin. It catches me off guard and I flinch expecting to feel stings- although, he did not place the wipe on any wound I had. He was toying with me. Seeing my reaction, he pulls away and falls into

another laughing fit. I push him down so he falls back on the seat. "Fucking dumbass!" I call him. He still laughs.

"I'm sorry, I'm sorry... I couldn't help myself." he explains while his eyes tear. He lays back on the seats and uses his elbows to support him. "You are so uptight and pessimistic- it is impossible to resist."

"Then you better fucking learn how to resist..." I threaten. He still laughs. The thing about me is once you piss me off- you're dead to me. But for some damn reason, I couldn't bring myself to slam a door in the American's face. And he annoys me to pieces to the point where I want to strangle him. Yet at the same time, I couldn't envision myself killing him. He promised me hope in my life; and he proved that promise to me when we were wrestling on my moving car, when we lit a show of fireworks inside of a house, and just now with the cellular tower. Such a wondrous sensation of excitement. Surely, I wanted to continue to feel this way and ridding of the American would not guarantee that.

And I would consider these conflicting feelings to be understandable. There must always be balance in life. I could both hate and enjoy the American's presence. I have an underlying hatred towards everyone in general, but, it just so happens that I hated America less than everyone else. He now stares at me silently. Why did he stop laughing- oh shit was he talking to me? "What?" I ask with a glint of concern in my voice. He can't read my mind can he?

"You were looking at me weird..." he says. I feel my expression sink to display a false tiresome state. "So?" I ask pretending to give no fucks. "It looked as if you wanted to eat me or something..." he confesses. I roll my eyes while groaning, "You're such a fucking weirdo..." I mutter. He laughs some more.

While he was distracted, I began to disinfect my wounds with the wipes- patches of my skin begin to burn. Despite I received many injuries from my father, I certainly was not used to healing them manually. I endured everything and would tend to leave them alone. The most I would do is wash them while I bathed- and even that hurt! My household had not a single band-aid lingering around. However, of course my injuries would heal with no problems. This

time around was different, I got hurt from the outside and I do not know the tiny dangers that are colonized on the trees. I didn't know what to expect- if I had a tree branch up my ass, I wouldn't be surprised! I knew this case was purely mind over matter. I thought of the outside to be more dirty than inside my own household, I would sure hope that is the case as well. Even if I didn't decide to take care of my wounds, I would be okay in the end. Yet, this time around was also different because I was free to seek band-aids on my own. I wasn't entrapped in my house with nothing- I was free.

I am interrupted from my thoughts when I feel a soft breeze on my arm that I had just cleansed. It soothed the stinging. I stop wiping my opposite arm and turn towards the breeze. The shit is scared out of me when I see it was America blowing on my skin within close proximity. I slightly jump back and pull my arm away from him. "W-What the fuck do you think you are doing?" I interrogate. He chuckles softly, "Relax, I was only helping you out. I used to blow on my cuts to make it easier to cope with the pain." I stare at him bewildered, "Well cut that shit out!" I demanded. "Will you take a fucking chill pill?" he says, "You literally offered to help me before too- there's nothing wrong with me helping you!"

"Oh yes there is!" I say stubbornly, "Listen, I don't invade your personal space so don't invade mine." I watch him smile wickedly. "Does it really make you that uncomfortable?"

"Yes..." I tell him. He sits up and stares dead into my eyes. "The environment you grew up in made you really reserved." I roll my eyes, "No shit Sherlock..." He then continues his irritating tangent, "Deprived of all love and affection... no wonder you grew up to be so cold and pessimistic. You're a little too independent, given how smart you are, you should know that isn't healthy. If you truly want to start feeling better you have to let me help you."

"Oh fuck off already." I say, I know what he is trying to do. I toss the wipe aside and grab the ointment canister opening it. I hear America let out a sigh, "I got to hand it to you, I have never seen so much determination in someone so dead before."

"Thanks?" I say as I rub small amounts of the ointment onto my skin. Ridiculously small amounts too- I hated the stinging sensation

and wanted to suffer as least as possible. Plus, I only needed a little to do the trick. America watches me creepily... I restrain myself from looking at him. Why was he so weird? I wish he could be fucking normal for once. And I absolutely hated when he tried to analyze me- talk about an invasion of privacy.

"Russia?" he calls. "What?" I ask while still having my eyes glued to my arm. He chuckles, "Do you even know what you are doing?"

I perk my head up, "Um yeah? It isn't rocket science- I am capable enough to do the bare minimum of aid." I say annoyed. His smile only grows and it starts to intimidate me. "Are you sure about that? Because that isn't even enough ointment- it will barely do anything for you." I could not stand this agitating boy sometimes. I no longer reply and I only roll my eyes. I wasn't going to even try to explain myself. Before I know it, he reaches to take my arm and he puts the ointment on himself. I am alarmed and I was tempted to pull away. However, America speaks to me in the most soothing voice, "You're supposed to put this much on and rub it in like this..." I have never heard him speak in such a tone before. I was soon to realize it was emitting a contagious disease because I felt like I was having a fever. How peculiar the American was. It was making me feel really uncomfortable, but I couldn't bring myself to move. I froze; perhaps I really did fall into the frozen lake after all.

He was talking the entire time but I was distracted and had tuned him out. I couldn't focus. He then started treating my other arm; and I stood there stupidly and helpless. The way his hand grazed upon my skin made my stomach stir. Was I really that touch starved? No- this was only another one of his stupid manipulative games, he was once again toying with me; I knew he was trying to pry into that little brain of mine to study it like a wild animal. I would not allow it. I begin to tug my arm away but he latches onto it tighter. "Relax, I am almost done." he tells me, "I told you I could help." He happily places band-aids on me as I was flabbergasted. Was I supposed to say thank you or bitch slap him? I did not know.

He sticks the last band-aid to my skin, "See? Now was that so bad?" he asks me. I stare at him momentarily before snatching my arm away. "You're so fucking weird..." is all I could manage to choke out.

America simply chuckles, "You're welcome." I mumble out a few more curse words and he chuckles some more. "Hey, I'm starving. Can we please get something to eat?" he asks. I nod my head happy that the subject change would stop my mind from falling into the pulling current of overthinking.

"Cool, remind me to get a cup with only ice." he points to his foot, "It'll help my ankle." Once again I nod my head. "Do you think you'll be okay to drive?"

"Let's find out." he says chillingly. I sighed and moved away from the door. He hops down and starts walking regularly... too regularly.

"Hey! You tricked me- your ankle isn't hurt at all!" I shout, how dare he lie! He looks over to me with a poker face. "Do you expect me to crawl helplessly on the ground to the front seat?" he mocks, "It is a tolerable pain."

"Bullshit!" I say, "We fell 200ft! How are you no longer limping?"

"Did it ever dwell on you that I may in fact be used to this kind of injury? I have my ways with coping with it." he says.

"So are you saying you're immune to the pain?"

"Precisely."

I still believed it to be bullshit. What was the point of trying to get ice then? Perhaps he was one of those people who could not feel pain-congenital insensitivity to pain was it? The American only confused me more and more. It was making me desperately want to see him snap- whether if it were getting angry or crying. I needed reassurance that he was human. He seemed so numb...

Once we were in the car, he began to drive. "Do you think any of the fireworks might have killed your friends?" I ask. He glanced over to me chuckling. He does not answer.

Weirdo. I start to pick at my band-aids since I had nothing better to do. The rest of the car ride was quiet.

When we arrived at the food joint, he parked his car as closely as he could. We got out; I wasn't limping as much compared to before but America was walking completely normal. I still thought of it to be strange.

We waited on the short line for some food. When it was our turn, I spoke up to order. I didn't like ordering but I was so hungry, I didn't even care.

Oddly, the person standing behind the register completely ignored me. I was staring dead at them; it was not like they couldn't hear me. I look down to America to see if he was just as confused as I am. Again, he was wearing a poker face.

I lean my face down to his ear, "Why are they just standing there?" I asked with annoyance laced in my voice. America simply shrugs. He points back to behind the kitchen; two workers were moving quickly to satisfy their customers in the drive-through. "Maybe we should have them take our order instead." he suggested.

Before we know it, we are back in the car and pulled into the drive-through. I kept reflecting on what had previously occurred inside. How rude I had thought of it to be. They had one job; I would have loved to have socked them in the eye and made them regret ignoring us.

When it is our turn to order, America speaks this time. He pops his head through his open window. He remembered what I had tried to ask for previously. Very observant he was...

When we pull over to the next window America holds his cash resting on the window. When the employee sees us, they wear a confused expression before laughing. What was so funny? They carefully take the money from America and place the bag on his lap.

"Thank you, have a good day!" America says before speeding away. He tosses the bag over to me. "Divvy it out for us!" I can only find myself looking at him.

"What the fuck is with that place?" I interrogated. America sighs, "I

guess slow customer service. I would have assumed that you wouldn't have such high expectations for them..."

"Bullshit! It is the bare minimum- I don't expect them to be intelligent mathematicians but ignoring us and laughing in our faces for no reason is fucking rude!" I complain.

"Want me to drive back over there so you can lecture them, Karen?" he says mockingly. I furrow my brows and he falls into another laughing fit.

"Shut the fuck up..." I say defeatedly. I dig into the food bag and take my things, laying it out on my lap. I rest America's food on the center console for him. I indulged into my food happily- I had barely consumed anything today. America does the same.

"Now where do you live?" he asks with a mouthful of food. He hands me his phone to put it into the gps.

I take his phone and begin to punch in my info. "I'll give it to you but knowing my address is not an invitation to show up at my house whenever you want." I tell him coldly. He only chuckles.

"Oh Russia, I have no desire to stand before your doorstep. You have nothing to fear."

I scoff, "Nothing to fear?" I look out the window and watch the raindrops race each other. "Do you really believe I would ever be afraid of your pip squeak ass?" However, he does not reply. I turn to face him and I find myself springing back alarmed at how close he was now to me. His elbow rested on the center console with his head in his palm; he stared at me with a pool of amusement in his eyes and a growing playful smile. "I can make you tremble..." his words seem to drip with lust.

I was taken back at his sudden switched demeanor. I feel myself avert my gaze and back more into my window. He was too close for comfort. "E-Eyes on the road..." I tell him.

"Aw..." he coos.

"What?"

"Are you afraid?" he teases.

I hesitate for a moment before thinking of a wise response, "It'd be a shame if you totaled your car when you had just gotten it back..."

"That isn't what I was referring to; we drove backwards before- I know cars don't scare you."

"O-Okay?" I stammered. I am not admitting that his close proximity was putting me on edge. "I don't know what you are referring to then..."

He chuckles smugly, "Do I make you nervous?"

"Huh?" I shout abruptly, it causes me to choke on my food and I start coughing terribly. The car then starts to feel like an oven. How embarrassing this all was.

America snickers at my given state. "Are you alright?" He hands me his soda cup. "Here, drink this to wash it down." I snatch it from his grasp and I slurp it to stop my unwanted cough. Thankfully, my coughing dies down.

"Better now?" He speaks sounding like he was holding back a laugh. I still suck his straw without saying a word, all I do is nod my head to his response. I found that the sweet soft drink was a good balance to this awkward situation.

America chuckles breathlessly, "That was so cute..." I feel knots forming in the lower pits of my stomach and the car air becomes even hotter. I can feel his gaze fixated upon me when I know it should be placed on the road. I still silently sip his soda.

Don't get me wrong: I liked being around America... but not like this. He was beyond skilled at nitpicking the things that made me uncomfortable. I was beginning to ponder as to why he was able to make me so nervous, I had thought it was because he was very unpredictable and a psychopath... but I fear it may be developing into more. I think I was afraid to allow him to be my friend. It's all new to me... it troubles me that I might regret it. America concerns me greatly, yet, he doesn't necessarily disappoint me. Pisses me the

hell off, sure, but disappoint me? Never; at least not yet...

"Russia?" he calls invading my thoughts. I lift my mouth from his drink, "Yeah?" I respond softly.

"Look at me."

I continue to sip his drink, ignoring his request. I stare out the window which displayed the dancing droplets; I practically ignored the bland scenery in the background too. I then feel him stop the car in the middle of the road.

"Russia, look at me." he repeats. I believed his request to be odd- plus, I couldn't bring myself to stare into his absent minded eyes. I then feel a warm hand under my chin and it turns my head. My lips abandon the straw and I am soon met with America's eyes. My shoulders stiffen and I swear everything that surrounds me was caught in a scourging fire. I am unable to say anything.

"I want to let you know that it's okay to let your guard down sometimes... if you are too uptight all the time, you'll only feed the pessimism growing inside of you and it will rot your brain." he warns. I blink incessantly while feeling his breath tickle my face.

"I-" was flabbergasted... the advice was inserted at such an unexpected time and it completely threw me off. I didn't know what to say. I feel myself nodding my head, "Okay..."

Not only did his words arise great discomfort in me, but his pose. The position we were in erupted great concern in me. I hated it yet, found myself content at the same time. I couldn't be this touched starved; Christ, this is really bad...

He smiles sincerely. "I see you are already learning, I'm surprised you haven't pulled yourself away yet... I'm proud of you."

"Uh... thanks?" I say baffled and flustered.

"Another thing: you are even more cute when you blush." he adds. And that was my breaking point; I quickly snatch myself away from his grasp and turn my head with a hand covering my face.

"Bullshit! I don't do that!" I sneer. I couldn't have been blushing this entire time... was I? I didn't even know I was capable of doing that- was that what that strange hot feeling is? Oh no... how the fuck was I supposed to know what that felt like?! The realization left me feeling mortified.

"Yes you are!" he sings.

"S-Shut the fuck up..." I warn. I felt like a helpless bug being poked at with a stick by America.

"By any chance, are you sexually attracted to men?" he asks.

"What the fuck- No!" I blurt out. I knew for sure I wasn't a homo, my body only reacted this way because I have been lonely for as long as I could remember. So of course any kind of attention can easily fluster me. I didn't like knowing that I had a weakness. And I certainly didn't like knowing that he knew my weakness.

"Hm, then are you sexually attractive to women?" he pesters.

"No!" I blurt out once again, "I am not attracted to anyone- I hate everyone!" He lets out a joking offended gasp. "Even me?" he asks with a sadden voice.

"Yes." I say. I wish I had ended it there but my mouth kept moving, "But it just so happens that I hate you the least out of everyone else..."

"Really? Then... may we please be friends?" he asks. I turn to face him and see that he has an arm extended out for me to shake. Was I even ready to commit to a friendship? It seemed surreal to me- but honestly, what did I have to lose? I guess there is a first time for everything. I remove my hand from my face and I make it engulf his; we shake.

"Friends..." I tell him. He smiles happily. When our hand shake comes to an end, he unlocks the car. That was when I realized that we sat in front of my house this entire time. He speaks, "When would you like to hang out again?"

"Tomorrow." I state. I watch him smirk in content, "Well in that

case, I have the most funniest idea for us to try..."

Fever Dream

And tomorrow certainly did come. I found myself waking up at exactly 5:30 am and I had awaited for word from the American. Once again at 5:55 he had texted me, this time however, it wasn't sketchy- he sent me words that read: "Good morning, text me when you are ready!"

Within minutes I tell him that I was ready now. I was prepared; I made sure to get myself together quietly without disturbing my family. America hearts my message and tells me he will pick me up in 5 minutes. I creep downstairs and wait by the door. No one was awake but me; good thing too- how would I explain to someone that I was going to hang out with a guy this early in the morning without a clue of where we were going. Then I remember that no one would even bother to interrogate me. My family doesn't even talk to me anymore.

5 minutes pass and I was now in the car with America. The sun greets us as it slowly rises and coats the entire town in its warm golden light.

"What's on the agenda for today?" I ask him- even though I already knew that he won't tell me.

"You'll see..." he says ominously, "Did you eat breakfast yet?"

"Cereal bar." I tell him.

"Good, an excuse to get coffee." He breaks a sharp left that almost causes me to hit my damn head on the window. "Fuck!" I shout. "Calm the hell down you psychopath!" I demand. Maybe I should put my seatbelt on... I go reach for it but there isn't even one there. Fucking typical America... He falls into another laughing fit.

After we get our coffees from a drive through, he takes us to a little farm on the countryside. We step out of the car and now stand in front of a foreboding wild corn maze. He begins a long tangent

while I sip my black coffee. "This farm house has been abandoned for many decades; over the years, I hear these savage dogs started roaming their corn fields. Since then, no one dares trespassing these grounds..." he shifts his gaze over to all the warning signs that read "No trespassing", "Caution", "Beware of dog", and etc...

Huh, I started ignoring all of those...

"Okay..." I start, "So let me guess America, we will be searching for these dogs?" He chuckles loosely, "Close!" he admits, "Instead we will be avoiding them to complete the maze." He takes a few steps towards me and digs into his pockets. He then holds both of his hands out clenched in a ball; when he opens them, he reveals a white mushrooms in each palm.

"One of these mushrooms is a Marasmius oreades, completely safe to eat... while the other is a Clitocybe rivulosa, highly poisonous... You pick whichever mushroom you want to eat; the one you don't pick will be the one I eat..." he explains.

I swallow the last drop of my coffee and throw the cup to the ground. A choice like this was too thrilling- I hold my hand out, hesitant of which to choose... "I must compliment that you are getting very creative..." I tell him. He smiles benevolently, "Thank you... I try."

"I have an idea up my sleeve, close your eyes..." I tell him, he listens and does exactly what I had requested. I remove the caps of both the mushrooms and switch them. America opens his eyes and grins. "Oh you want us both to suffer then huh?"

I nod and I take the dismembered parts of the mushroom from one of his hands and pop it into my mouth. I almost spit the atrocity out because of how terrible it tasted- but I endure the awful pain on my tastebuds and swallow it. He replicated my exact action; I watch as his face momentarily turns sour before regaining his original poker face.

"The side effects from the poisonous one takes about 30 minutes to kick in..." he tells.

"What are the side effects?" I ask. He only smiles maliciously.

I sigh defeatedly, "Right... more suspenseful if I didn't know..." He laughs at my response. Our gaze then shifts over to the corn maze. I stare at it baffled. "America, where is the entrance?"

His eyes dart around before answering. "No idea. Shit- the path isn't visible anymore. The corn grew uncontrollably..."

"And you are realizing this now? Why couldn't you come to that conclusion before you took us here! You knew it was abandoned for like decades!" I argue.

"It wasn't supposed to be this bad!" He groans loudly, "I should've brought an axe!"

"Yeah dumbass, why didn't you?" I spit. He shrugs with a nervous smile. We then hear howling from afar and I see America's eyes light up with excitement.

"Come on Russia, before the dark rolls in!" He takes my hand and proceeds to run into the rows of corn. Plants slap our faces and I cannot see. "A-America!" I yell, "Slow down!" It was getting harder and harder moving my legs through the narrow sections. He hushes me, "Quiet before the dogs hear us!"

"And they won't hear us moving this obnoxiously?" I counter. He only laughs. But for the first time- I hear his laugh cut short. It fades into a soft shriek. He trips over corn stems and drags me down with him. Within seconds I was entrapping him underneath me. As I stare into his doe eyes, I feel my body heating up- and now it's even worse because I am aware that this feeling is me blushing. Somehow during all of this, America still maintains a nonchalant face.

I immediately jump off of him. I blurt words out in response to me internally panicking, "You fucking idiot! I told you to slow down!" He chuckles loosely and sits up. "You're right, I'm sorry..." he says in the most sincere tone.

"You better be. Don't pull me through this fucking maze like that

ever again." I demand. He slowly shakes his head with a spreading smirk. "Oh relax Russia... you are getting all worked up for nothing. Stop being so pessimistic..." I furrow my brows. "Would you stop calling me that? I will be upset about whatever the fuck I want and there is not a damn thing you could do about it." I state confidently. He happily rolls his eyes and now stands up. "I know... but being pessimistic takes away from all the fun. You need to loosen up a bit. Live a little!"

"Bullshit! I am. That's why I am here with you now doing dangerous shit. I strive not to be as optimistic as you! I couldn't imagine living a life full of happy expectations that'll only disappoint you in the end." We begin to walk through the corn maze.

America speaks, "I feel there are two different types of expectations... the ones you have for the world, and the ones the world has for you... can you guess which one I hate more?"

I silently think for a moment. Given his past and how annoyingly positive he was made me draw an easy conclusion. "You hate the world having expectations for you; your parents in particular I presume?"

He nods his head. "Very smart you are- spot on. And do you know why that is?" Once again, I take a second to think; oddly we were quite similar so I place my feet into his shoes and walk around. "Because then you aren't living for yourself... you're only living to please them."

"Exactly. And being pessimistic has the same effect on you. It's draining all your remaining life instilled in you. So rid of it." An eyebrow of mine raises slowly, "You're contradicting yourself." He stops walking.

"What?"

His tone sounded wrong... it was full of a very chilling radiating anger... I've never heard him with such hostility- and he only had spoken one word! It alarmed me at first, but I soon find myself deeply intrigued and liking it. I decide to dig further into his skin. Perhaps it was my turn to be the annoying one... Was this my

chance to finally see him snap?

"Did I stutter?" I say, "You contradicted yourself." I walk in front of him and closely watched his darkening expression dwell.

"How so?" he questions coldly.

"You claim that you despise living for other people- living up to their expectations. Yet, you tell me to stop being pessimistic to live up to your expectations. You're contradicting yourself." I explain to him.

"Who said you not being pessimistic are my expectations?" he replies.

"It goes without saying... the way you press it onto me is enough to tell me that you wish I were different." I say.

"I wish you were different but not in the way you think. You haven't realized it yet..." he says.

"Realized what?" I question. He doesn't answer me and continues walking.

"How dare you change the subject and then ignore me because you are wrong!" I protest.

"Enough." he says.

"No fuck you! I'm remaining pessimistic, I'm going to find out what you are talking about, and you're doing the rest of the maze by yourself." I spit.

He snaps his head to face me; his expression was scrunched up in disgust. He stares at me like this silently before the face simply melts away. Back into his poker face he speaks, "I'm sorry."

I scoff at his forced apology. "What a sad excuse for a bandaid... do you really expect me to simply brush off all the new anger you've instilled in me?"

He stops walking and I watch a smirk form on his face. "Are you

saying you'd rather hug it out?" He extends his arms and slowly creeps over to me.

I find my feet moving me backwards. "Hell no!" I shout immediately, "Stay your ass away from me or I'll punch you!" I do not want another awkward event to unfold like yesterday. I wish he would forget about my weakness already- why must he toy with me like this?

His smile deepens and the distance between us decreases more and more. "I could use a good sock in the eye..." he says aroused. "Hit me with your best shot... it might make you feel better..."

I stare at him bewildered. He is so unpredictable it is dangerous... I swallow a dry lump in my throat when I feel his arms embrace me. He wraps my torso like a python entrapping it's prey. I hate when he reminds me of how touch starved I am. His hands rub my lower back and I quickly feel heat shooting up to my face. He has to be doing this all on purpose. I can not handle this- I do not like the way I am feeling. I pry off his clingy arms and push him away from me without saying a word.

"Do you feel better now?" he taunts. I stare at him flabbergasted. My fists transform into stone and I throw a punch to the middle of his face. His head flings back and his legs wobble. When he lowers his head to meet my eyes with his teary eyes, I see the bottom of his nose stained with fresh blood. He holds his nose temporarily while processing the fact I had just punched him. I watch as he wipes the blood from beneath his nose with his hand. He inspects it with a poker face. I honestly didn't know what kind of response to expect from him; but, I didn't think he'd smear his blood on his pants and smile at me chillingly.

"I missed that feeling... takes me back..." he says amused. I blink a few times in confusion.

What a fucking psychopath.

I think it is best to not question his response at all- it'll only raise more questions... I cross my arms, "Don't fucking touch me ever again..." I demand.

America sighs in disappointment, "And there is the pessimistic behavior again..." He turns around to continue walking in the field. I subconsciously tag along with vulgar words wrapped around my tongue. "You are too fucking invasive! Are you really that lonely where the only thing that can entertain you is making shit up about me?" I say irritated, "Do you not have anything better to do?"

"You are the one still following me. Leave if it bothers you that much." he says nonchalantly. I stop walking when I realize he is right. I am not really forced into any of this... breaking the blood pact will not lead to a serious consequence. My gut feeling keeps telling me to leave him. I know this is all wrong. But if it were so wrong then why did it make me feel so alive? I hated feeling so internally conflicted. It was constantly back and forth. Maybe it was time to tune out my thoughts. Perhaps they were only holding me back. I wanted to feel alive- I don't want to go back to how my life was previously. I was in desperate need for a change. I slowly breathe in and out to restore both order and tranquility in my clouded mind. My frustration begins to wash away and I can see clearly.

I look up and I see America staring at me. He looked hot- hot as in his face was dampened with sweat.

"What's your deal?" I say. My saliva drips sloppily from my mouth. I wipe it with my arm and America stares at me amused. He mumbles something under his breath.

"What?" I say. As I take a step to him my vision starts to blur.

"The effects are settling in..." he says cheerfully.

My eyes slightly widen- We were both so angry that we didn't notice the early stages of our symptoms. Our arguing distracted us. "America, what are the rest of the side effects?" I ask hoping he will now tell me.

America giggles and wipes the sweat off his face. "Does it even matter at this point? Let's just keep going and see how far we get. I love the element of surprise."

"My vision is starting to get blurry and I'm drooling a lot..." I say, "If it progressively gets worse, I might have to stop..." I wipe my gross slobbery mouth.

"Nonsense!" He chimes. He grabs my other hand, "As long as we stick together we will be fine!" I try to focus on his smiling face and his doe ey- wait... his eyes were not doe, his pupils were so... small... I have discovered another side effect. Perhaps my eyes have done the same? I bend my knees and lean into America's face. He does not flinch; he remains poker faced and his anew void-less eyes stare into me. "Your pupils are tiny." I tell him, "Do mine look that way too?"

He stares at me for a moment and then smiles softly, "No, your eyes still dilate every time you look at me."

"Huh?"

He chuckles with a small crescent sewed into his face. My eyes bat before I say "I don't do that shit! Don't lie to me!" His chuckles are still the only thing that I can hear. I would say this is an unusual laughing fit of his... it is more soft. It's still annoying but it only tickles my ears. I refuse to believe that I actually find it to be pleasurable.

I feel my eye twitching- oh how I would adore to send another punch to the center of his little button nose... but I know it wouldn't do anything... It wouldn't even threaten the American in the slightest. A huff escapes my mouth before standing a straight again. Soon America's chuckles soak into the loose dirt and I feel my arm being tugged forward.

How long were we going to last in the corn fields?

"America!" I call out, "Do you even know which way you are going?"

"Of course I do! I am going north..."

"Why north?" I question.

"Would you rather go west?"

"I don't know... what's west?"

"..."

"America?"

"I don't know..."

We were not going to last long in the corn fields.

We continue to walk north. When we weren't chatting, I could hear the corn rustling in the wind and howls imbedded in the background. What would we even do if we were to encounter the wild dogs? Is it stupider to run or to stand our ground? Were we flight or fight? I glance over to the American with a strong urge to address my concerns. I watch as he wipes his dampened face with his forearm. He isn't looking too good- usually he is great at composing himself but it is clear he was exhausted. We wouldn't survive an attack. Was it our final purpose to be the dog's meal? Perhaps.

And that's okay...

I'm unsure if I accept that because I enjoy the thrill or if I'm suicidal...

As America and I wonder the unwelcoming paths together, something catches my faulty eyes that completely shatters my heart. A petite snow dog lies lifelessly in between tall corn rods. I stop in my tracks filling quickly with sympathy, "Oh poor puppy..." I say helplessly. They didn't stand a chance in this world.

America turns around seeming confused. He had not even noticed the dog. "Puppy?" he questions while walking over to my side. He stares at the spot, "Yeah... that's really unfortunate..."

I bend down to reach my hand to the puppy. I wish to give him a gentle stroke but America latches his hand onto my wrist preventing me from doing so. "You should leave it alone..." he says.

My eyes trail upwards to him, "But why?" I ask heartbroken. He says nothing but his expression says everything. His eyebrows and

eyes were saddened with a mouth that's been turned sour. I look back over to the petite snow dog only, they were no longer there...

"Wait where did-"

"We should keep moving." America tells me. I allow him to drag me away from the haunting spot. Confusion pounds my head. This all feels like a fever dream.

As he pulls me north my thoughts spiral through my mind. Ideas as frequent as heartbeats. And then I actually hear a thud- America has just passed out on the ground. Looks like he had both a fever and a dream. I laugh to myself because I am too humorous. It was odd only hearing my laugh and not the American's usual laughing fit. I stop because it felt unnatural to me. I squat down to observe America. His pretty boy face was submerged in the dry dirt. I carefully flip him back over like he is a pancake in a frying pan. His dewy skin shimmers in the sunlight. I didn't realize how beautiful he actually is- yet again, my vision is quite blurry so that doesn't really say much.

I feel I am supposed to be panicking about the fact he passed out- but strangely, it didn't worry me in the slightest. I knew America would be okay in the end because that's the type of person he is. It is not like he is so easy to get rid of. Although, I should probably move him out of the hot sun since he was already sweating astronomically. I scoop him up bridal style and move into the forest consisting of only corn. I sit down with him while leaning back on stiffened corn. Surprisingly, this was all very comfortable... and it is rare when I feel comfortable like this- or maybe it is still the side effects of the mushroom. I slowly feel my eyes shutting and I drift off to sleep with the American in my arms.

If I wake up torn to pieces and mangled by wild dogs, I'd be fine with this being my last good memory...

To my surprise when I awoke, I was not met by vicious animals. The evening sky was the only thing that had greeted me- even America was gone. Damn bastard! I rise to my feet only to feel painful shocks emerge throughout my head. So it was not only the evening sky, but rather, a headache as well to greet me after my

slumber. How consoling...

It would've been absolutely lovely if the side effects of the mushroom had worn off but it hadn't. My vision was still disoriented and my saliva dripped like a running faucet. I wipe my mouth as I take in my surroundings. The patch of dirt in front of me appeared to be unusual. I advance my steps forward and squat down to get a better look at it. Mocking words were carved into the dirt, "Come find me" it read with a smiley face following afterwards.

Fucking typical America.

And so I started to explore the darkening corn fields solo. I would hope that America still plans to go north, I wouldn't know how else to find him.

Despite the fact I had just awoken from a nap, I still felt exhausted. I was no longer feeling excitement, thrill, or adrenaline- call it what you will. I was ready to leave. I wanted nothing more than food and rest. "America!" I yell, "Get your scrawny ass back over here!"

I continuously call his name hoping he will appear back by my side. But it still remains desolated. I give up trying to summon him. I can only hear the crickets and my foot steps filling in the atmosphere. Loneliness was something I thought I was accustomed to but for some reason it was bothering me. The empty feeling in the corn field had an eerily nostalgic vibe to it that only gave me chills.

The further I progressed the more my thoughts rambled on and on. If we aren't out of this maze by sunset, it will be pitch black here and we won't be able to see a single thing. This felt like the beginning of a horror story, and I sadly was the dying victim...

When night fell, I was afraid to keep moving north. I didn't even know which way was north anymore- the sun was gone and I couldn't even see my hand in front of me. I wonder how America was holding up, he was either dead or abandoned me in this maze to fend for myself. Maybe he is a shitty friend after all.

Speaking of shitty, that's how I was feeling- I was starving, restless, had my body aching, a leaking mouth, and I can go on. I just

wanted to get out of here. Oddly, I wasn't paranoid and I felt like I should be given the circumstance... but I felt inconvenienced and uncomfortable.

I feel my foot get caught in some stupid plants and I lose my damn footing and plunge into the ground. I let out a groan and decide to just lie there. I couldn't find the strength in me to get back up again. I feel like I would be better off if I were buried right here, right now. I'm interrupted by my thoughts when I feel something crawling on me.

I jerk upwards and brush myself off in a panic. Gross gross gross get the hell off of me- God I wish I could see!

I quickly walk away from the spot annoyed that I was forced to keep going. And ironically I feel myself walk through a spider web which only adds to my panicked frustration. I walk away while brushing myself all over hoping all the pest were off of me. Although nothing is on me anymore, I still feel things crawling on me and the webs.

Fuck I hate it here!

"America!" I scream at the top of my lungs. I scare a few lingering crows and they caw while soaring away.

"Russia!" I hear him call back from behind me. I stop and swiftly turn around. Fucking finally!

Everything seemed to be working out until I hear the dog howls...

Oh no... oh no no no- I completely forgot about the wild dogs, I am an idiot!

"Russia!" America shouts, "I'm coming to you!" In the distance from where America was, I hear collective barks and the corn rustling aggressively. I stand still as I hear the sound moving closer and closer to me...

"Fucking run Russia!" I hear America scream. My eyes widen when I realize what is happening and I turn around and run like hell. I push through the corn recklessly and head in a straight line back

from where I originally came from. This was terrifying, it was darker than if I were to close my eyes and the vicious dogs were hot on our tails. Then next to me, I hear laughter. He caught up to me.

America's laughing fit overlayed the sound of the deafening dogs. His laugh was contagious and I joined in while running for my life. And then I felt it again, the thrill. The adrenaline happily pumped through my body and carried me away. Once again, I finally feel alive.

We make it out of the maze but it wasn't the other end- no, we were back at America's car. We never completed the corn maze...

With the dogs still chasing behind us, we climb on top of the car. They jump and scratch the car trying to get us. We sit on the sunroof of the car catching our breaths. We look at each other with wicked smiles while gasping for air. What a surreal feeling- it made all the lonely suffering beforehand worth it.

The dogs below us bark hungrily wishing to consume our flesh. I look down at them and I partially feel bad. They were starving and won't get the meal they worked hard chasing. America has had enough of the barking and took out his car keys. He makes his loud obnoxious car alarm go off. Not only does it scare me, but it scares away the dogs.

They cower back into the desolated cornfields.

America and I were now in the car driving away from the abandon farm. We agreed to stop and get fast food. During the ride, we reflected.

"I had a hell of a good time, if only the build up didn't take that long..." America says cheerfully.

I rub my eye with a balled fist. My vision was starting to clear up. "Build up?" I question.

He nods while staring at the road. "Truth is, I only went in there with the intentions of being chased by the dogs."

"Well it was a lot of fun..." I admit with a smile.

"I know!" he shouts enthusiastically. "I can still feel the adrenaline! I feel like I can do anything right now!"

I chuckle at his excitement. I wholeheartedly agreed with every word.

His smile then turns sad, "I wish I could feel this all the time... you know, without having to put my life at risk and all..."

"With all do respect America, if you felt this feeling all of the time it would become the new normal for you and you would begin to appreciate it less..." I tell him.

He sighs, "I know, you're right..."

I nod my head. "Besides, we get to go on dangerous adventures to even achieve this feeling! I say that the entire process is an award within itself, despite how tedious it can be..."

"Yeah" he chuckles, "you do make a good damn point!"

"That reminds me... why the hell did you abandon me in the maze?"

He laughs nervously, "Oh that... well, when I woke up the only thing on my mind were those dogs. I guess I grew impatient and became too eager to wait any longer..."

"So you left me?" I say slightly irritated.

"I tried to wake you but you told me to "fuck off", I'm sorry..."

That did sound a lot like me so how could I blame him? Although, I feel he could've tried harder to wake me. I roll my eyes, "Whatever you are forgiven..."

I hear him let out a breathless chuckle, "Pessimistic!" he chimes.

"Shut your ass up..." I say annoyed.

He falls into a laughing fit and I can only smile at him.

A Strengthening Bond

I happily munch on my meal in America's car. He just delivered the greatest news! He said we could have a sleepover. Now I know it is childish, but I have always wanted to have a sleepover. I never got to experience one. I feel super excited. I fantasize about the kind of trouble we will get into.

When we arrive to his house. It truly is a beautiful home but it seemed so empty.

"Hey America, is your family not home?" I ask.

"Oh... they traveled far to visit some family. I decided to stay behind because I didn't want to go. I have better plans..." he winks at me before stepping out of the car.

I look down at the ground with a smile before letting myself out.

Inside, his house was grand- definitely old fashioned but it was nice. I reach for a light switch only it does not turn on. "Ah!" America says, "Fuse must've blew again... I hate when it does that..." He proceeds to open a door that leads to the basement. "I'll just be a second, make yourself at home!" And with that he shuts the door.

What a fucking weirdo. I look around and decide to explore. The living room was heavily furnished and had the strangest decorations- And don't even get me started on the yellow wallpaper. It's patterns would drive anyone insane.

Upon the coffee tables, it collected dust... actually everything was collecting dust. How long was America's family gone? Does he not clean?

I should stop; who am I to critique someone else's home? I guess it was because I hardly ever entered another person's house. I never had a reason to. I never had been invited anywhere.

I continue to stroll around trying to be less judgmental. But I couldn't unsee how everything collected dust.

I examined the bedrooms and immediately knew which one was America's. It was decorated differently compared to the other rooms. The other bedrooms all appeared the same- bland, no personality... but America's was loud. Covered in all different kinds of posters of musicians, athletes, and movies; a multicolored bedroom set consisting of the colors red, white, and blue; shinny trophies and photographs on his shelves and led lights boxing in his room...

Despite how crazy his room was, it was the most appetizing in the house. It was the only room consisting of vitality! It suited him, it was all over the place and yet, it had a pleasurable display. This is my favorite room in the entire house.

The lights then turned back on. America must've fixed the power. As I exited his room, I felt something in the pit of my stomach. I had thought of it to be the effects of the mushroom but I could tell it was something different. Something felt wrong...

I don't know why but I looked above me and I saw the attic. And that's when I could smell the faint rotting scent. I reach my hand up to pull the string open...

"Russia?" America calls from down the stairs. I turn my head to face him with my hand still touching the string.

He tilts his head, "What are you doing?"

"..." I say nothing. Not even I knew the answer to his question. What was I doing?

"I wouldn't open that if I were you, my father left something important up there... if he finds out I was snooping around- he'll kill me." he says jokingly.

"Alright... sorry..." I lower my hand. What the hell was up there?

He walks up the stairs towards me. "Come I'll show you my room!"

"I think I already found it." I tell him. I felt uncomfortable now... not enough to be afraid of him, but he's definitely hiding something. And I have a feeling that if I find out, there will be no going back...

He chuckles, "Did you?" He leads me to his bedrooms and switches the lights on. I was definitely right about this room being his.

He show cases it with his arms extended, "Welcome to my domain!"

I walk around and re-examine it. "Your room feels a lot more at home than my room..."

He chuckles again, "Thanks, I'll take that as a compliment..."

"You should." I say with a smile.

"If you want you can shower first and I'll set up your bed..." he tells me, "Bathroom is down the hallway and you can find a towel in the closet."

"Okay thanks!"

"Oh, I should get you fresh clothes too..." He begins to open a few of his drawers.

"America, there is no way I'd be able to fit any of your clothes... you're so-"

"Short?" he spits.

"Yeah really fucking petite!" I say mockingly.

He flips me off, "Just get in the shower will you? I'll figure it out..."

I laugh before exiting the room. I can still smell that rotting scent. I get a towel from the closet and I enter the bathroom shutting the door behind me. I wish to say that the bathroom felt normal but it was coated with a blue dim lit light. I still thought it was better than my bathroom. And surprisingly, this room didn't have that much dust!

While I was showering I heard a loud thud. "America?" I shout. After getting no response I shut the running water off for a second, "Are you okay?"

I hear a muffled "Yeah sorry I'm okay! I tripped up the stairs!"

I roll my eyes and turn the shower water back on. Fucking weirdo...

Soon before I know it, I'm out drying myself. I wrap the towel around my waist and stare at myself in the mirror. I run my fingers through my wet hair.

I hardly ever examined myself in the mirror, most of the mirrors in my house are shattered. My father used to joke that it was because my younger brothers looked in it. He always did say that I had better looks than them. I don't see it.

I exit the bathroom and head to America's room; strange... the rotting smell was now gone...

I enter his room and see him setting up another bed. Oh, I didn't even know that his bed had a pull out bed- that's convenient. His back is to me while he fits the sheets onto it.

"Hey, did you find clothes?" I ask.

"Uh yeah!" he turns around and stares at me with slightly widening eyes. "Oh wow! You're hot as shit!"

I blink a few times trying to process the compliment. "Thanks?" I avert my eyes with a heating face. "Where are the clothes?" I manage to stammer out.

"Ah right! He looks away from me and walks towards his dresser that had neat folded clothes laid on top. He scoops it up and hands them to me. "You're in luck that I like a few baggy clothes in my wardrobe, see how they fit!"

I take the neat pile from him with a nod.

He stretches and begins to make his way to the door. "Alright, I'm going to hop in the shower real quick. How about you find us

something to watch on the tv, hm?"

"Sure, I can do that..."

"Cool." He steps out of the his room and holds the side of his door looking back at me. "Hey, don't stress if the clothes don't fit... I don't mind you being shirtless!" he delivers with a wink before shutting the door.

I feel my face getting hotter. I really got to get used to being complimented, this is bad how much they are starting to fluster me... it's starting to make me think that I... never mind... let's not go there...

I get dressed in the shirt, shorts, and hoodie America provided for me. Surprisingly, they fit well! I then pick up the remote on his desk and search for something to watch.

A few minutes pass and I am still looking for something to watch. America enters the room already in his clothes, he too wears shorts and a hoodie.

He leans forward to dry his hair. "Did you find anything?"

"Nope!" I say while popping the "p".

He snakes his towel around his neck letting it hang and makes his way over to me. "How about we watch a conspiracy documentary? I have really been addicted to those lately!" he says.

I shrug, "Sure, that'll work". I search them up and hand him the remote to choose. He throughly reads through each one before choosing. When he selects one, he doesn't click play and places the remote back on his desk. I tilt my head in confusion. Before I can interrogate him as to why the hell didn't he play it, he speaks.

"We will save it for later... I have some fun ideas in mind for us!" he says.

"Really?" I ask excitedly.

He nods, "I know we are both exhausted but this is your first

sleepover, we have to make it the best."

And it was the best! It was everything I could imagine. We played video games, we pranked called people, we battled each other in the house with nerf guns, we played music and danced, we ordered pizza, we built a fort in America's room, we played chess and card games, we drew fake tattoos on each other, we gossiped about the kids in our school, and now we were lying down watching the conspiracy documentary.

"That's a load of crap!" America said while pointing to the tv. "There's no way the ghost haunted the funeral and then their house afterwards!"

"I don't know if it's bullshit, it seems possible!" I say.

He shakes his head. "Nah. It has to be two different ghost!" he says confidently.

I laugh, "And what are you? Some damn exorcist?"

"Hey who knows! I might be!" he chimes.

"And what does that make me? The ghost?" I joke.

He laughs, "I sure hope not, otherwise, that'd mean I'm doing a shitty job!"

I join in with his laughter. When we calm back down I turn around and look up at him from my shorter bed.

"Hey, thanks for everything Ame..."

He looks down at me seeming a little surprised but his face turns into a soft smile. "Anytime Russia! I'm glad you had a good time, I did too."

I smile with a nod before turning back around to stare at the tv again.

"So..." I hear him say from behind me, "Is that my new nickname?"

I turn around again to face him. "What?"

"You called me "Ame"..."

"Uh I did?" I ask.

He nods with a grin.

"Oh uh, then yeah? I guess..."

"Cool..." he says with a smile. "It's better than all the other names I am usually called. I like it!"

"Me too..." I say.

He stays smiling at me for a moment and I smile back at him.

"Well I'm exhausted so I think I will go to sleep now... goodnight Russ!" he says. He turns to face the wall.

I feel my stomach slosh and the air around me warms. I turn around to face the television again and I find myself drifting to sleep with a smile.

Four weeks go by and the American and I kept doing deadly stupid shit. Because we only had so little time in the summer left, we hung out everyday to make the most of it. We both knew that once school came back around, we'd have less opportunities to do this kind of thing. It sucks when it is imbedded in your head to take your studies seriously. I had no desire to really be anything after I graduated so what was the point of all of this?

Anyways, I sit in the passenger seat of America's car as he pulls up to the liquor store with a cloudy setting sun in the background.

Oh yeah, I forgot to mention... I got into drinking- it really adds the jazz to our dangerous stunts.

"Are you sure you don't want me to go in there with you?" America asks.

"No Ame, I already told you I need you to be my get away driver." I

remind.

He chuckles, "Fine alright. Just hurry up would you?"

"Yeah yeah I'm going..." I open the car door and step out, "You still want whiskey right?"

"Aw you know me too well..." he says wholeheartedly.

I roll my eyes with a smile before shutting the door. I can feel it slightly drizzling outside.

When I entered the store, the bell on the door rang and alerted the cashier that I was there. He stared down at me in confusion. I mean, if a minor entered my store I'd be concerned too. Although I wasn't really a minor... just too young to drink.

I walked around to the back and grabbed America's favorite bottle of whiskey before grabbing my favorite bottle of vodka. Why vodka? I guess it was because I would always see my father drink it and I wanted to see what all the hype was about. I didn't actually think that I would like it that much. But my life is full of surprises isn't it?

I cradle both the large bottles in my arm and grab some random fancy bottle off the shelf. I quietly creep behind an aisle towards the door, being sure to stay hidden from the cashier. I then throw the fancy bottle across the room and it shatters into a thousand pieces. I watch as it distracts the paranoid cashier and I bolt out the door, ringing the annoying bell one last time.

I rip the car door open and throw myself into the seat. America speeds off without even giving me the chance to close my door. I reach my arm out and shut it without complaining.

"Good hustle!" America says proudly, "What'd you get?"

I adjust myself comfortable in the seat before showing off his bottle. I watch his eyes light up.

"Ooo yay my favorite! Thanks!" he says cheerfully.

"No problem!" I say as I pop open my bottle and take a swig.

I hear our crossbows rattling in the back when America drives over a speed bump. It causes me to spill some of my drink onto myself.

I leak a sound of distress before lowering the bottle and complaining "America!"

"I'm sorry I'm sorry! I didn't see it!" he says in defense.

I screw the bottle of vodka closed and rest it underneath the seat. "Bullshit!"

"You're just mad that you're clumsy..." he says.

"Me?" I say sounding surprised. "I'm not the fucker going 50 miles over the speed limit!"

He then slams on the breaks making me jerk forward.

"Ah!" I shout.

"Is that more suitable for you Ruski?" he teases.

"That's it!" I climb over the center console to beat his scrawny ass.

He continuously swats me away, "Get away from me before I catch your pessimistic coodies!"

I grab him by his shirt collar, "Is that what you are calling it now?"

"Yeah, I like it. What are you gonna do about it?" he presses.

"Murder you..." I spit.

He gasps offendedly. "You? Kill your best friend?" he laughs, "I don't think so... you love me too much."

I roll my eyes and loosen the grip I have on his shirt as I recede back into my seat with crossed arms.

"Aw!" he coos, "You do love m-"

"Shut your annoying ass up!" I interrupt with tinted cheeks. He snickers and continues driving.

Today's deadly feat was my idea.

The plan was for us to chug these entire bottles and run on the slippery rooftops while trying to shoot each other with our crossbows.

My idea made America really damn excited- I mean how could I blame him? My idea was awesome.

America parked his car along the street next to these red-bricked apartment buildings. I told him this area would be perfect since the buildings were all relatively the same size and close together. It would be easier to jump across for each one. The drizzling seemed to pick up a little too- finally, this was the first time it has rained this week!

We got out of the car with our crossbows and alcohol. America held up his bottle of whiskey and toasted.

"To feeling the thrill!" he says.

I hold up mine and repeat his words back to him. "To feeling the thrill!" Our bottles clink and we chug it all down.

America smashes his bottle onto the ground. "Yeehaw! Let's get this going!"

I smash mine as well with a smirk and we make our way to the side of the building. Up the fire escape we climb.

America turns his head to me when we stood on the roof. "I'll be the mouse, and you'll be the cat." he says.

I load an arrow into my crossbow. "Fine by me!"

We each only had two arrows to try to shoot each other. Sounds easy, but with us both moving and being slightly drunk it'll definitely be something. I watch as America loads his arrow. "I want a ten second head start!"

I laugh, "It doesn't matter how many seconds you get, I will still always catch up to you!"

"Then this shouldn't be long..." he challenges. He then takes off and jumps over alleyways to get to the next buildings. I start counting backwards.

When I finally reach zero, I sprint to catch him. As the distance between me and the edge of the building shortens, I use all my lower body strength and lunge myself across to the next building.

America had surprisingly gotten far. I watch as he turns around and aims his crossbow at me.

Shit! I hit the deck and the arrow sores over my head. I get back onto my feet to try to catch up to him. I hear him laughing in the distance.

I bring my crossbow to my face and aim it at him. I fire the arrow but he jumps off the building onto a giant white moving truck. Huh... that wasn't the plan...

"Missed me!" he yells.

I pick up speed when I realize that I'll lose him if I don't get onto that truck! I leap over alleyways. Right when I get close to the truck, I watch America aim his crossbow at me from below while I was in midair.

The arrow grazes my shoulder tearing my shirt in the process. I fall and hang onto the ledge of a building. That was close, I almost got shot and fell to my death. I pull myself back up and see that the truck got even further. Shit I need to reevaluate another plan.

I sprint to catch up but this time I don't aim my crossbow at America, I aim it at the truck's tire. I shoot and disrupt the momentum of the vehicle. I watch as America tumbles to the edge of the truck and holds on for dear life.

I was now aligned to the truck and I jumped onto it. I look down at the dangling surprised American. "Hey cutie..." I say. I extend my arm out to him, "Need a hand?"

He stares at me with disbelief completely flabbergasted. I laugh at his reaction. He still hasn't gotten used to me also flirting.

My laughter comes to an abrupt stop when America grabs my hand and pulls me into him causing us to kiss on the lips. My eyes widen and I know my cheeks reveal a blush. With a smug smile, he then pushes me away and I fall on my back. "Thanks for your assistance precious!" he teases. I stare into the sky silently not knowing how to process what just happened. I felt like I was burning up. But I liked every short-lived moment of it. My stomach stirs and sloshes and I could feel a smile crawl up into my face. I think I really liked kissing. America then lays next to me and joins me silently in staring up at the sky.

By the time night fell, the truck had carried us through a lone peaceful highway. Before it could take us any further, we hopped off.

We walked alongside the highway in the cold pouring rain towards America's car. The only things on our minds were getting back to the car... and that kiss. As nice as it was, it relatively confused me. I build up some courage to ask about it.

"Hey Ame?"

"Hm?" he looks up to face me.

"Why... why did you kiss me?" I ask.

He shrugs, "I felt like it."

"But why?" I press.

"I really don't know- I'm so sorry..."

"Uh no no... you don't have to be sorry, it wasn't that bad after all ..."

He stares at me pokerfaced without saying a word.

"What?" I ask confused.

"Are you saying you enjoyed it then?" he teases.

"Huh!? No! Why must you always put words in my damn mouth!?" I spit with a heating face.

"Aw..." he snickers with a growing smile.

"S-Shut the fuck up!" I say as I speed up my walking pace.

The American only catches up to me, "I bet you wish to kiss me again!" he continues to tease.

"Go lay on a fucking highway..." I mutter under my breath.

"Only if you join me Ruski!" he says with a smirk as he heads to the center of the road.

Huh... I forgot that we were in fact on a highway. I find my footsteps mimicking his and before I know it, we were both laying next to each other on the highway.

The road was desolated and no vehicles made an appearance. The rain pours lightly over us as we stare up into the sky.

"Russ, can you see the stars yet?" America asks me.

I still don't see shit but I tell him, "Yeah, I see them. What about you?"

"Mhm, I always choose to see them..." he says.

I finally get it now.

"Hey..." I turn my head to face him, "Thanks for showing me the stars..."

He faces me with a smile, "Glad you gave them a chance..."

I look back up at the starry sky and smile. "Yeah..." I fumble with my hands that laid rested on my stomach. I then decided to examine one of my hands. It was the one that was slashed for the inauguration. The wound was now a memorable scar.

"Did your inauguration cut heal into a scar by any chance?" I ask him.

America lifts up his hand and reveals the same scar as well. "Yes, and I hope it stays right there forever..."

I reach my scarred hand over to his and I gently hold it. I then lower our hands in between us on the wet cement.

"It will..." I say confidently. He smiles at me with rosy cheeks before looking back up into the sky.

"Do you know what falls down and never gets hurt?" he asks me.

"You?" I chuckle.

"The rain..." he tells me.

Unexpected Verity

After the long day, I now lie peacefully in my bed. As I find myself drifting to sleep, I reflect on the great day I had with America. I know we've only been friends for about a little over a month but I felt like I had known him my entire life. I was happy anytime I was in his presence. Just being with him made me feel alive- I felt that us feeling the adrenaline together was a bonus.

It slightly upsets me that I've lacked a friendship my entire life, I truly did miss out. Well, not really I guess because no one I've ever observed was like America. He was surely unique.

Actually, I quite honestly was beginning to feel like we had more than a friendship. The thought scared me. I couldn't possibly be ready to pursue a relationship, I just got the hang of having a regular friendship...

But I saw this coming. As someone who was been neglected and ignored their entire life, it makes sense as to why I would start seeing him that way. Plus I would have to factor in that he is the only person I can tolerate and want to be around... and all the flirting... and maybe us experiencing that adrenaline together everyday bonded us closer.

I can't blame myself for liking him. I knew the possible risk when I befriended him. And yet, I accepted it with open arms.

It wasn't that I was afraid to date him... I didn't give a fuck about anyone's opinion. They all disappointed me so why should I care if I disappointed them? Who were they to me?

It was the commitment that put me on edge. Right now we would be completely fine, but when school starts back up again, how would I know that he would still be committed to me? He's popular and has "friends", and I don't... I feel like I would just set myself up to be heartbroken.

Yet again, that was only a possibility. Anything could happen, and I mean anything...

I allow my thoughts to put me to sleep. It was supposed to feel peaceful. It almost was a perfect day. That was until he showed up.

My father kicks open my door and starts yelling at me in the middle of the night. I can't make out anything he is saying because he slurs all his words. Was he speaking in Russian or English? I didn't fucking know!

But I did know one thing; he has been drinking. I see him holding a bottle in his hand.

When I do not reply, he tosses the bottle to the floor and angrily storms over to my bed to hit me across the face. He then picks me up by my shirt collar and shakes me violently.

"Get outta my fucking house!" he screams.

What the hell was wrong with him? Why did I have to be his punching bag? It isn't fair. This is the only attention I get from him, pain!

He throws me onto the floor and starts kicking me everywhere. I cover my head to protect myself while I weep. I wish for this all to stop. What could I do to make it stop?

Every time I accepted the beatings he would just come back harder the next time. I tried convincing myself that the hits hurt less and less every time but I wasn't so sure I could deem that to be true. It's never going to get any better is it?

Not like I had much of a choice anyways right? It's not like I could kick his ass... I wasn't that brave.

My mind feeds me flashbacks of everything I have done within the past month to prove that last sentence wrong. This was nothing compared to all those deadly situations... so what the hell was I doing? Why was I holding back? America would want me to fight.

"Go away! Stop coming back here!" my father screams as he sends

me another kick. Only this time I grab his foot and pull him to the ground. I roll over to his face and I start punching him until my hand hurts. He tries holding my fist but I power through his force. He then sends his knee to my stomach which was finally enough to get me to stop. I hold my stomach as he rises back up. I stare at his now swollen face... I think he looks worse than me... did I really do that?

He latches his fingers around my neck and raises me into the air. I struggle to breathe as I fight to break free. He still grasps me tightly. With no other option, I jam my thumb into his eye socket. He screams and drops me. I cough and my eyes meet the bottle he had tossed on the floor earlier. With him distracted, I run to it and scoop it up.

I make my way to my father and I hit him upside the head with it. The glass shatters and he finally hits the floor for good.

I stare at the scene in disbelief. I couldn't believe that happened. I didn't even know if he was still alive. I didn't want to be here for another second, I drop the remaining bottle handle and I run to the front door with my car keys.

I drive in silence on the highway. I couldn't fucking believe what had happened. I could still feel my hands trembling. Never in a million years would I have thought I would be capable enough to do that. I don't think I could ever go back home...

So I pulled up in front of America's house. I hated how empty and dark it always looked. Ironically, I thought of it to be really welcoming. But only his car was in the driveway, there's no way his family are still on vacation right?

I knocked on his door only to get no reply. I then try opening it to find that the door was unlocked. I let myself in, surely America wouldn't mind. I know he'd completely understand.

"America?" I call, "Something really bad happened..." I say brokenly.

I creep upstairs to his bedroom, only, he wasn't even in there.

"America?" I call again. Fuck where was he? I could really use him right now...

I then notice something odd about his desk. I walk over to it. A bunch of different news articles were printed and scattered all around. What was he up to?

I lift one to examine it. The headline read, "Teenagers severely injured and hospitalized after mysterious firework explosion!"

What? I look at the other headlines...

"Driver claims a "possessed car" caused him to crash into a ditch!"

"Store owners say their items disappear from their stores!"

"Self driving red car spotted throughout town again!"

"Possessed piano caught moving!"

"Reporter states demons like the rain!"

"The new top ten most haunted locations in town!"

"18 year old, America, still reported as missing."

I stare at all the news articles with a shaky breath. What the fuck was all of this? I step away from the desk feeling sick to my stomach. I felt like I was going to pass out- what did this all mean? What was America not telling me? Why did all of these articles sound like us?

I then hear the floorboard creak behind me and I whip my head around.

America stares at me with widened eyes. He stood still in the doorway and didn't dare to move.

"You have some fucking explaining to do!" I yell. I pick up the papers and aggressively wave them in the air. "What the fuck is all of this!?"

I watch his eyes start to tear up. "I'm so sorry..." he chokes out, "I swear I was planning on telling you..."

"Telling me what!?" I yell.

"P-Please don't hate me..." he cries. I've never seen him like this, it made me even more uncomfortable. Was this him finally snapping? I didn't like it.

"Stop crying!" I yell, "Please fucking stop! I just wanna know the truth! What are you hiding from me? Why are all these on your desk? Where is your family really? What's in your attic? Did you kill them? Why does it say you are still missing?"

He shuts his eyes to fight back his tears. He silently trembles without saying a word.

"America... please... I'm your best friend, you can tell me..." I say desperately, "I don't think I could ever hate you..."

He exhales slowly and nods. He walks over to his desk and opens the top drawer revealing a journal. He takes it out and walks towards the door.

He stops and looks at me. "I always feared that this day would come... I promise you I'll explain every damn detail and answer all of your questions, but you won't believe me unless you come with me..." he then clenches his journal and walks out of the room.

I look back at the scattered articles before following him to his car.

Soon he parks his car next to the curb and leads me into a cemetery. At first I feared he was going to try to kill me or show me his dead family... but it was far worse. He shows me the most unforgettable sight I could imagine. I immediately feel lightheaded and my heart sinks into my stomach. My eyes swell up with water and I lose all feeling in my body. Nothing could prepare me for this...

We stood in front of a tombstone that read my name.

I stare at it completely speechless. With a trembling breath and

teary eyes, I manage to choke out;

"When did I die?"

The ghost next to me doesn't dare mutter a word and hands me his journal.

Epilogue: America's Journal Entry

I've seen the boy lingering around a few times- yet, I do not think he even realizes that he is dead.

Or perhaps he does know and refuses to move on, my curiosity begins to throb my mind.

I remember a few years ago when I had first come to the conclusion that I was dead, at first I did not realize it. But gradually, I began to pick up on it.

Firstly, I felt different. I could barely feel emotion and felt hollow within. Everything that would make me happy no longer excited me as much.

Secondly, I was ignored. No one could see me nor interact with me. I thought everyone was being an asshole to me. I accidentally haunted my friends and family without even realizing it. My parents got so afraid that they sold the house and moved away with my brothers... leaving me with the house all to myself.

Thirdly, if I focused hard enough I could see dead animals and other dead people. Although seeing other dead people was extremely rare. And the reason behind that was they got to move on. From what I have gathered, it is because they attended their own funeral. Unfortunately for me, I was not aware if I even had a funeral because I did not know I was dead. So now I am just stuck here.

That boy must be in the same situation as me, only, he did not figure it out yet.

His name is Russia and we used to be in high school together. We never really interacted but because we were both really intelligent, we were put in many of the same classes throughout the years. I

was very popular so you would think that he should know I am dead, however, my death was kept secret by my cruel parents for a wicked reason.

Russia died shortly after me. At first I didn't know how but I did some digging around and found out that after he was gifted his ice skates, he visited the lake to envision what it would be like to skate upon the ice when winter came. But his jealous brothers watched over him and threw heavy rocks at his head until he was unconscious. They drowned him in that lake.

When Russia had shifted to the other side, he must've thought he passed out when he woke up on the shore of the lake. He then went about his life like everything was normal.

Now, as I watched him walk away from his car, I could still tell he tries to live a normal life. I stood by my friends at the mini mall. I followed them around constantly because I felt they were all I had left. I was lonely without them. Although, whenever they brought up conspiracies about my sudden disappearance, they admit that they are relieved that I am no longer with them.

They say it is because I am crazy and that they love to use my car. I had lent the keys to my friend Japan so she could run an errand but before I could get them back, I died. So now she and everyone else uses my precious car. And every time they do, they say they hope I never return. I grew to hate them.

While they were chatting in front of the clothing store, I watched Russia walk past us quickly with his head down; he headed towards a little knick knack store.

I thought it would be a good idea to try talking to him. I needed a friend, and I knew he did too! He has been deprived of all communication and had no idea why. It was only right to help him. I wonder if he too felt the emptiness within. If I befriended him, I could easily help him with that issue. I got excited thinking about our possible friendship. When my friends walked to my car, I went in the opposite direction to Russia's car and waited upon his arrival.

But... I felt perplexed when I remembered that I would have to tell

him that he was dead. I didn't know how to break the news to him. I couldn't just explain this all to him when we were first meeting. He'd never believe me. I would have to wait until we establish some kind of trust before I can lay this all out on him.

When we first talked, I tried to be nice but it had turned him off. I figured that he could use "nice" in his life but I was wrong. He abandoned me in the desolated parking lot. I laid defeatedly on the ground trying to find the stars. It was difficult to see them because it felt like I screwed over my first impression. But I think that was just my impatience talking.

My gut told me that he would be back. Russia hasn't had a real conversation with anyone in months so I could only imagine how lonely he must've felt. And believe it or not, lonely people do crazy things...

Like giving me a second chance.

So I wasn't so surprised when I heard his car come back around and him shouting my name. He was searching for me. That's when I knew it was meant to be!

I remember thinking that I had to play my cards smarter. Russia wasn't as dumb as I deemed him to be. He clearly didn't want "nice", he wanted real. He doesn't like things sugarcoated. That's when I realized I was going to have to get inside that little head of his to completely understand him and get us on the same page. I couldn't have him abandoning me again. I needed a friend, and it was going to be him. Call me crazy, I already know.

So for once in my life, I was real. No more fake personalities. I showed him who I really was and I knew it intrigued him.

As we talked, I kept prying more and more into his head. I even got him comfortable enough to tell me his backstory. It was obvious he didn't know he was dead yet. I was making great progress. He then asked for my backstory and that's where the realness had to come to an end.

Well everything I told him was true except for the part about the

baseball team...

You see, when I had told my dad that I made the baseball team after he deliberately told me not to try out, he was furious. We still did break out into an argument but I lied about the part of it ending with him threatening to remove me from school and then me storming off to my room plotting to trick everyone. No... in the middle of our argument, my father ended up strangling me until I died. When I woke up, my body was in the attic. At the time, I thought he was punishing me... but he was only trying to hide my body...

None of my other family members know of his devious doing and he convinced everyone I ran away...

I remember thinking that my entire family was ignoring me on purpose because my father told them to.

During this time interval, I couldn't understand why I felt extremely empty so I did try to kill myself. That part of my story was in fact true... And when I did that, not only did I discover that the adrenaline from thrilling events could make me feel alive; but, it contributed to me piecing together the fact that I was a ghost.

I did things that should've killed me; and when neither of them did, I knew I was already dead.

The strange thing is, I don't feel entirely dead. I can still eat, sleep, touch things, collect wounds, and feel pain. Hell- I can't even fly or walk through walls! I'm starting to think all of that stuff was made up!

But being a ghost isn't so bad when you have a best friend by your side majority of the time- well, he will be. He doesn't show it but I can tell he likes me!

When the time is right, I promise I will explain this all to him and surely he will understand. Or perhaps, I can just let him read this very page. Yeah I think I'll do that. Hey Russia! I'm sorry if this is a lot to take in, I tried my hardest to stall from telling you because I know how much you hate disappointment... just don't be so

pessimistic about it okay? I think you've had the most fun ever being dead than you did being alive. So please don't be mad at me for not telling you right away...

Sadly journal, this may be my last entry for awhile because Russia and I have so many up coming adventures to fulfill in order to feel alive! And I honestly no longer feel anything from writing in you, I only wrote in you to cope with my bitter loneliness. But with Russia now in the picture, that won't be an issue.

P.S. Hey, looks like this isn't my last entry. Russia now knows about him and I being ghosts and I let him read this page a few moments ago. It was definitely a lot for him to take in. He didn't even know where to begin and I don't blame him. But we did some talking and I answered his remaining questions. Thankfully, he isn't upset with me. He understands completely and feels bad I had that pressure to begin with.

Something interesting though; he told me that he wants to get revenge on his brothers and my father who killed us and I honestly couldn't agree more. After what they did, they deserve it and much worse. He says that us not attending our own funeral is "bullshit" as to why we are still stuck here. He thinks that we are still here to avenge our deaths and I think he might be right... Although, I really don't mind being stuck here with him and he feels the same way. I'm glad that he isn't being pessimistic about this whole situation. Anyways until next time, salutations.